

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT  
IN YAMAHA JUNIOR MUSIC COURSE (JMC) AT  
KOTA DAMANSARA, SELANGOR.**

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**CULTURAL CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
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**CULTURAL CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
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**ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION**

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Field of Study: Musicology

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research is a case study that examined parents' involvement in Yamaha Junior Music Course (JMC) where parental engagement is compulsory as part of the course syllabus. The requirement of parent accompaniment conforms to findings from past literature that reveal parental involvement led to positive outcome in students' achievement in formal education. However, there is a lack of research into parents' roles during such music classes like JMC and at the same time, a clear guidelines regarding parental involvement is missing in the JMC syllabus, this becomes the aim of the present research. A qualitative research framework was selected in the context of this study in order to examine parent perception and their behaviour during the class. Data were collected through open-ended interviews, observations, and participation. Patterns of parents' behaviour, involvement, and their perceptions are analysed in this research. The outcome reveals perception and patterns of behaviour that may furnish new knowledge to the various stakeholders involved in the JMC.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini telah menunjukkan bahawa penglibatan para ibu bapa dalam sukatan pelajaran kursus amat diperlukan berdasarkan kehadiran mereka dalam Yamaha Junior Music Course (JMC). Kepentingan para ibu papa menemani anak-anak mereka mengukuhkan dapatan dalam kesusasteraan zaman dahulu yang mendedahkan bahawa penglibatan ibu bapa dapat membawa kepada hasil positif dalam pencapaian pendidikan formal di kalangan para pelajar. Walaubagaimanapun, penyelidikan yang berkaitan dengan peranan para ibu bapa semasa sesi pengajaran dan pembelajaran masih kekurangan dan dalam masa yang sama, pembimbingan yang jelas terhadap penglibatan ibu bapa tidak ditemui dalam silibus JMC, perkara ini telah menjadi matlamat utama kajian ini. Suatu rangka kerja penyelidikan kualitatif telah dipilih dalam konteks kajian ini untuk mengumpulkan persepsi ibu bapa dan tingkah laku mereka semasa di dalam kelas. Pelbagai maklumat telah dikumpulkan melalui temu duga terbuka, pemerhatian, dan penyertaan. Corak tingkah laku, penglibatan, dan persepsi para ibu bapa juga turut dianalisiskan dalam pengajian ini. Keputusan penyelidikan ini telah mendedahkan persepsi dan corak tingkah laku yang berkemungkinan dapat membekalkan ilmu pengetahuan baharu kepada pelbagai pihak berkepentingan yang terlibat dalam JMC.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstrak .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>List of Appendices .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 1 : Introduction .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1 ....Introduction.....	12
1.2 ...Background of the Study .....	12
1.2.1 The Definition of Parental Involvement	13
1.3 ....Problem Statement.....	18
1.4 ....Significance of the Study.....	19
1.5 ....Conceptual Framework.....	19
1.6 ....Limitations of the Study .....	20
1.7 ....Research Objectives.....	21
1.8 ....Research Questions.....	22
1.9 ....Chapter Outline.....	22
<b>Chapter 2 : Literature Review .....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1 ....Introduction.....	23
2.2 ....Parents' Involvement In General Education.....	24
2.3 ....Parents' Involvement In Music Learning.....	26
2.3.1 Home Music Environment	26
2.3.2 Parents' Musical Background	27
2.4 ....Conclusion.....	29
<b>Chapter 3 : Methodology.....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 ....Introduction.....	31
3.2 ....Qualitative Research Framework .....	31
3.3 ....Ethnography and Participant Observation.....	34
3.3.1 Participation-Observation	36
3.3.2 Interview	38

3.3.3 Setting	39
3.4....Data Analysis.....	41
3.5....Conclusion.....	43
<b>Chapter 4 : Findings .....</b>	<b>44</b>
4.1 ....Introduction .....	44
4.2....JMC Setting and Course Description .....	44
4.2.1 JMC Syllabus	46
4.3 ....Participants Demographics .....	48
4.4....Parents' Exposure To Music .....	51
4.5....Parents' Perception of JMC .....	53
4.6....Patterns of Behaviour and Communication.....	63
4.7....Discussion.....	97
<b>Chapter 5 : Conclusion .....</b>	<b>107</b>
5.1 ....Overview.....	107
5.2 ....Summary of Findings .....	107
5.3 ....Implication of Research.....	111
5.4....Suggestion For Future Research.....	112
5.5 ....Conclusion.....	112
<b>References.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>125</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Parenting Style.....	14
Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework.....	20
Figure 3.1: Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation.....	35
Figure 4.1: JMC Classroom Layout in Kota Damansara .....	45
Figure 4.2: Knowledge Transfer Scheme in JMC .....	73
Figure 4.3: Staggered Teacher-parent-student Communicative Pattern.....	75
Figure 4.4: Passive Parental Involvement.....	77
Figure 4.5: A Cross-correlational Model for Parents' Perception That Lead to Different Patterns of Behaviour .....	106
Figure 5.1: Balanced Pathway of Communication Between Teacher, Parent and Child .....	110

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Demographic Information.....	50
Table 4.2 Lists of the Patterns of Behaviours during JMC.....	105

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## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Demographic Information Form.....	125
Appendix B: The Interview Format .....	128
Appendix C: The Consent Form .....	132

University of Malaya

## **CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study explores parental involvement in music education and a case study on Yamaha Junior Music Course at Kota Damansara was carried out seeking parental perception and behaviour in the classroom. As McPherson and Davidson (2006) observed, children develop their attitude, and their own ability to learn music through interactions with their parents. In addition, Brand (1986), McPherson (2009) found that in the early stages of child development, particularly in music, the home environment is crucial. Providing a home environment while learning may not be easily realised, however, in the accompaniment of a parent, a child receives lesson at the Yamaha JMC and thus, parental involvement plays an important role in this course. However, to what extent parent should be involved and what is the role of a parent in JMC are not written in textbook or any other instructional medium. Therefore, this study aims at looking into the gap in the literature and the JMC syllabus.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The Malaysian Ministry of Education (2013) has proposed that parenting courses be introduced in children's education to inspire and motivate parents to be actively participated. Alongside appended education development blueprint for years 2013 to 2025, they developed a framework to encourage parents' involvement in their child's formal education. Numerous studies have shown promising results when parents show their involvement in their child's education; simply put, children with more involved parents are shown to do better in class than those with parents that are not.

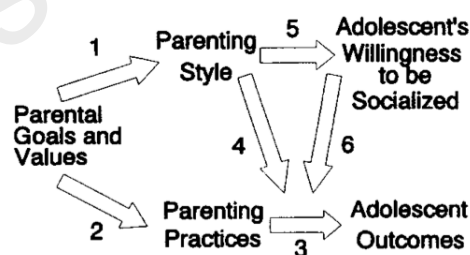
Shinichi Suzuki, a Japanese musician, educator and philosopher, was enjoyed in teaching children and he thought that children could learn music very young with listening to the surrounding music, and the children could start just as they started to talk. He believed that all children that are enlightened by teachers and parents have the talent to learn. Suzuki emphasised on the importance of parental involvement (Suzuki Association of the Americas, 2016). Major features that are relevant to parental involvement are the helping with students' practice, home structure, and musical experiences interests within the family. Parents are advised to focus on their child's effort rather than fixed ability perceptions (McPherson, 2009). Besides, there are other ways of which parents' involvement in their child's education, like providing the relevant resources for their child to flourish; financial and mental encouragement as easy as simply taking an interest in their child's education progress is more than enough to yield positive results. However, a more direct approach like taking their child along to music concerts, or assisting them in their practice, would prove to be a bigger motivator (McPherson & Davidson, 2006).

### **1.2.1 The Definition of Parental Involvement**

Darling and Sternberg (1993) identify parenting style as “a group of attitudes towards the child that are communicated to the child; and from that, create an emotional climate is generated in which the parents' behaviours are expressed” (p. 488). According Brito and Waller (1994), they defined parent involvement as “a conception that can range from annual informal visits to school, to frequent parent-teacher consultations, even up to being involved in an active school governorship” (cited in Georgiou, 2007, p. 59). Fullan (1982) points out “four forms of parent involvement:

instruction at school, at home, school governance as well as community service” (cited in Symeou, 2005, p. 172). The United States National Parent Teacher Association (2015) define parent involvement as the participation of parents in a child’s education and development from birth to adulthood; using parents as the primary influence in a child’s lives. There are many aspects in parental involvement:

- Two-way communication between the parents and schools
- Supporting parents as children’s primary educators, integral to their learning
- Encouraging parents to participate in volunteer work
- Sharing responsibility for decision making on a child’s education, health, and well-being
- Collaborating with community organisations that reflect schools’ aspirations for all children



*Figure 1.* Contextual model of parenting style. Parenting goals for socialization influence both parenting style (Arrow 1) and parenting practices (Arrow 2). Parenting practices have a direct effect on specific child developmental outcomes (Arrow 3). In contrast, parenting style influences child development primarily through its moderating influence on the relationship between parenting practices and developmental outcomes (Arrow 4) and through its influence on the child’s openness to parental socialization (Arrow 5). The child’s openness to socialization also moderates the influence of parenting practice on the child’s development (Arrow 6).

**Figure 1.1 : Parenting Style**

(Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 493)

Research in the field of psychology advocates the importance of motivation as provided by the parents in several key areas:

- Competency: A child who perceives themselves as competent are more likely to engage in learning tasks and skill utilisation.
- Autonomy: Parents are responsible in cultivating a sense of autonomy in their child so they would more likely be able to be self-regulating; they are more responsible for their own learning and are able to make independent choices.
- Relatability: A child with higher levels of intrinsic motivation and parental support would feel a closer bond with their parents.
- Purpose: An activity that a child feels meaningful doing it would turn out to be more successful and enjoyable.

(McPherson, 2009, pp. 92-93)

Most literature focused on parental involvement in school curriculum and co-curriculum. However, there is a lack of scholarly writing looking at music education. Music education takes various forms of teaching and learning such as individual lesson, group class and as part of the curriculum at school, for example. However, what caught the author's attention is the Yamaha School of Music that has a program for children age 4-6 named Junior Music Course, where parental accompaniment during class is obligatory. The Yamaha School of Music originated from Japan in the year 1954, and offered music lessons of the then unproven Yamaha method, which proved to be very

successful in the Japanese domestic market. In 1965, they expanded out of Japan, and now enjoys worldwide success. Genichi Kawakami, the founder of Yamaha method, urged teachers to prioritise the enjoyment of music learning, all while developing each student's innate talents (Miranda, 2000). The Yamaha Music Foundation was later founded in 1966 and offered a wider range of musical activities through local community.

Yamaha Music Schools have courses catering to a broad spectrum of students; from infants of 3 years of age, to mature adults; they are committed in developing and popularising music education, aiming to produce not only performers and composers, but an educated audience as well, whom of which would appreciate such talents being showcased. The Yamaha Junior Music Course (JMC) is a two-year group music lesson for children between the ages of four to six. It aims to foster a natural sense of musical sensitivity by associating sound with colourful and interesting visuals. Students learn to recognise melody and harmony, alongside aural skills such as singing and playing by ear. The JMC appeals to a child's emotions, and encourages expression through the medium of singing or keyboard playing; the progression through its syllabus is concurrent to the mental development of the child. Lessons are conducted in groups as it inspires cooperation and responsibility amongst students and parents alike. The keyboard is the most suitable instrument for learning the fundamentals of music as absolute pitch and range are visually represented and easily accessible; melody and harmony can be played simultaneously.

Parental participation is core to the success of the JMC. Considering a child's psychological development at this stage, the parent acts as an emotional anchor for learning to progress smoothly. Participating in the classroom means parents are able to



review key points of lessons and essentially recreate the same enjoyable atmosphere at home, making learning fun and effective at the same time (Yamaha Music Foundation, 2007). Unfortunately, early fieldwork observation by the author, who is also a teacher teaching JMC at Kota Damansara, found that the adult participants may not be fully aware of their role and importance in JMC, thus the author proposed this case study in aim to examine into the research subject – parental involvement.

In this study, the author selected a case study and qualitative research method. In considering ethnographic method in music education research, the approach enabled the researcher to immerse in the field of study and as an insider to the field. As Conway and West (2014) describe, the qualitative research method usually used in ethnomusicology is dominant among the plethora diverse research topics as it examines music teaching approaches in “both formal and informal contexts” (p. 23), providing an epistemological foundation of this methodology (Conway & West, 2014).

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), the researchers themselves are proverbial instruments of data collection in a qualitative research, in this case through means of interviews and taking video recordings; therefore it is vital for them to get close to their subjects. Being the teacher is to be a participant-observer, as they are able to experience the subjective dimensions first-hand. This research focuses on the awareness and perception of the parents themselves on their involvement in child’s music education; identifying patterns of parental involvement during the class. Therefore, as what Conway and West (2014) described, qualitative research can be conducive to self-awareness and ability to perceive oneself. The author’s reflexive account was also discussed.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Parental involvement in children's school homework influences their outcome because it has modelling, reinforcement, and instruction that affects their attitude, knowledge, and behaviour that related to their achievements in school. Students who have parental support in music education show better musical development (Hoover-Dempsey, 2001). There are numerous researches on the benefits of parental involvement having a great impact on academic progress; most of the available literature were studies based on surveys and questionnaires, based on the responses of the parents or students. However a reduced amount of qualitative method, observation design which able to provide more holistic research output is lacking. As Bresler and Stake (1991) explained, the strength of a qualitative study is that it is holistic because it is case oriented. Therefore, an in-depth understanding is attainable.

The JMC specifies that it is compulsory for parents to attend lesson with child every week. This conforms to past research findings where parental involvement is important. However, queries of the current research are, to what extent parents are involved in JMC and what role they play, and what traits of behaviour are to be encouraged, were not given in any form of reading or listening instruction. As pre-field observation gathered, the ignorance of some parents towards their roles in the classroom resulted in absence of participation, failure to assist their child when practicing and a lack of support in a home music environment.

Previous study based on parents in similar demographics (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) showed that Malaysian parents are result-driven; they are more concerned about the quantification of their child's music examination, mostly through public school syllabi, or an external music examination board (Leong, 2008). Not much is known about the

parents themselves, as well as their knowledgeability and attitude towards music. Interestingly, Malaysian parents believe that effort from parents can overcome a lack of talent (Ghazali & McPherson, 2009; Leong 2008). This research aims to fill in the missing gaps by looking into parent's perception and awareness about parental involvement, and traits of behaviour during class.

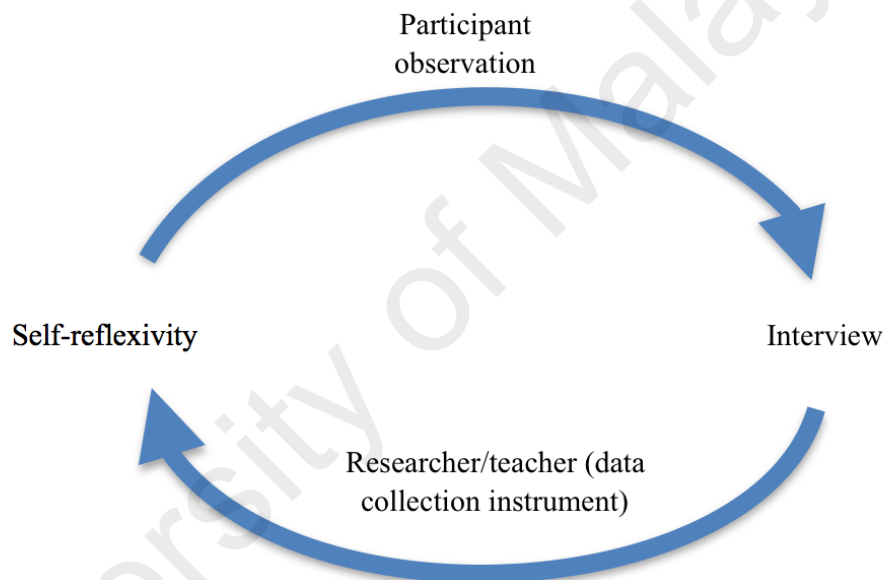
#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The outcome of this study may shed new lights into parental involvement in music education by focusing on Yamaha JMC. As mentioned earlier, parental attendance is compulsory in the JMC. It is important to investigate parents' perception and awareness on their involvement in group music lesson, and an understanding of this could help the teacher in their teaching. In addition, the research aims to discover patterns of behaviour of parents and students and to identify the positive ones in order to create a better classroom music learning. Therefore, results gathered from this research may be transferable when studying at other areas of teaching and learning that shares similarity with Yamaha JMC. The outcome delivered from this research could provide insights into parental involvement in teaching and learning that may be beneficial to the various stakeholders involved.

#### **1.5 Conceptual Framework**

In employing a qualitative theoretical framework in this study, parents and students are the subjects and the researcher acts as data collection instrument who participated in the phenomena (refer Figure 1.2). In the form of a case study and as a qualitative approach was chosen, the researcher becomes the instrument in data collection.

In this study, data were gathered via participant observation, interview, and the author's self-reflexive account. Data collected were coded and then themes were formed. In the final phase when data were collected in completion, data saturation was achieved and a triangulation of data was performed in checking reliability of data. Theories derived from literature review were cross-checked again with data collected and analysed. Thus in this study, a continuous data checking and triangulation were conducted in assuring reliability and validity of data.



**Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework**

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

Qualitative researchers emphasise on the exploration, directly from the observations and data to descriptions. As a qualitative researcher, it is important to be part of the participants in the research phenomena. In this case, it is significant that the researcher plays the role as the teacher (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Qualitative research chooses the realities to investigate; researchers are interested in the uniqueness of particular teaching or learning methods. The design in qualitative research also require

extra attention to other contents, such as aesthetic contexts, political, temporal, economic, historical, and physical (Bresler, 1992). In this study, the researcher finds that capturing the wholeness of the experience is more important than an experiment or non-experiment quantitative output; therefore a case study is selected even though it has demographic limitations unable to be inferred to a larger population. In this case, the Kota Damansara branch of the Yamaha Music School situated in the Encorp Strand building was selected as the researcher as there already exists a large student populace. The studios are fully equipped for group lessons. In terms of challenges faced in accessing the field, the researcher is currently teaching at the venue and permission from the school authority was received. Selecting a case where the researcher is a teacher of the class is important here in order to have an intimate access to the field as an insider. In terms of the research timeline in the context of a master's degree in mix-mode, a case study of a duration of three months was carried out.

## **1.7 Research Objectives**

The purpose of this research is to explore parental participation in the Yamaha JMC and thus the following objectives were designed in studying parents' perceptions of their involvement and classroom behaviour.

- To study Yamaha JMC's (Junior Music Course) requirement of parental involvement.
- To discuss parents' perception over their parental involvement in Yamaha JMC.
- To examine patterns of behaviour by focusing on parental involvement in Yamaha JMC.

## **1.8 Research Questions**

This study addresses some research questions by looking at the Yamaha Junior Music Course at Kota Damansara:

- What are the requirements of parental involvement?
- How much does parent understand, participate and learn with the child?
- What is their perception of parental involvement?
- In what way do parents participate in the class?
- What is deemed to be positive or negative in parental involvement?

## **1.9 Chapter Outline**

This study draws together ideas from literature to clarify parents' perception on parental involvement in junior music course in Yamaha Music School. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature which shown the basis of this study. Chapter 3 discussed the methodological approaches employed in this study. Demographical information about the participants were provided while the design of interview are discussed in the following section. Findings and the collections of data are presented in Chapter 4 and the last chapter discusses the findings and concludes this study.

## CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Numerous studies in general education have shown that parental involvement has a definite positive impact on a student's achievements and development, especially if the child is within four to six years of age. Most suggest that the main influence in a child's educational development is parental, as opposed to the oft believed school teachers. In music education however, few teachers believe in the benefits of parental involvement in the classroom (Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 2004) and therefore, more often than not, it is discouraged. Music teachers feel uncomfortable when a parent sits in during lessons. Ames (1976) who authored "Your Four-year-old: Wild and Wonderful" discusses the characteristics of a child of that age, their abilities and thoughts, and also ways to handle them. According to the book, a four-year-old loves everything new; it is the best time for them to pick-up a new skill. An article by the National Association for Music Education titled "Music representation in parenting magazines: a content analysis" by Sims and Udtaisuk (2008) summarises the information published through parenting magazines in respect to music education and found that the genres, quantity, and quality of music in a household are stated to be important for a child's development as music is able to achieve a calming, stress-reducing effect. Recent articles (Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014; Hogenes, Oers & Diekstra, 2014; Goldstein, 2012) show that music experiences in childhood have not only an emotional and social effect, but also a physical effect on a child's cognitive development. For their parents, it fosters emotional bonds between parent and child through informal communication (Sulkin & Brodsky, 2015).

## **2.2 Parents' Involvement In General Education**

All these studies prove that parent involvement in education has positive outcomes to students' achievement and researchers look into different strategies and different patterns of involvements. According to authors Hill et al. (2004),

Parent academic involvement is largely defined as parents' work with schools and with their children to benefit their children's educational outcomes and future success. Parent academic involvement is often operationalised as volunteering at school, parent-teacher contact or communication, involvement in academic-related activities at home, and the quality of parent-teacher relationships (p. 1491).

The results of the study show that behavioural problems are inversely proportional to parental education level and household income (both of which are directly proportional). Achievement levels and test scores were also inversely proportional to behavioural problems; work aspiration was found to be unrelated educational aspirations.

A qualitative research titled "Parent Participation in Literacy Learning" by Cairney and Muncie (2004, p. 393) explains that parents need to take every opportunity to take part in their child's education; a parent-teacher partnership would be most desirable; "...many educators adopt a very narrow definition of parent participation, which primarily seeks to determine what parents can do for teachers, rather than what schools can do for families". The researcher designed the "Talk To A Literacy Learner" program focussing on the strategies used by the child in reading and writing. Parents are aware of the diverse resources available at their child's educational institutions and become more capable in dealing with their child's problems.



A later study by Greenwood and Hickman (1991) identifies six broad categories of parental roles; audience, volunteer, paraprofessional, teacher, student, and decision maker. They determined that the positive influence that the home environment has on a child's learning can be further enhanced if parents and teachers worked together closely; however this concept has yet to be mainstream.

Some researches found that children of parents who are less involved with the school are at a higher risk of underperforming. Oyserman, Brickman and Rhodes (2007) proposed that "parent school involvement improves school outcomes in part because it signals to youth that school success is a self-reliant and attainable possible self and that negative 'offtrack' possible selves" (p. 480). The economic situation in the home may increase stress among parents, directly related to a reduction in time spent with their child and therefore leads to a low parent-school interaction. However, the results do not clarify the reason why this matters for middle and high school students.

A study by Anderson and Minke (2007) on parental involvement in education has yielded a positive relationship, associated with better grades, and higher achievements in reading, writing, and mathematics. However, parental role construction was limited; supported by Jeynes (2003) indicating that "the various limitations of many studies, makes it difficult to come to any firm conclusion about which aspects of parental involvement have the greatest impact" (p. 205). There are various types of parental involvement that need to be identified to match the most beneficial ones for certain social groups.

## **2.3 Parents' Involvement In Music Learning**

Parents should be involved by taking an active role in music learning, studies by Fagan, Brady, Learn and Moss (1992), Brand (1986) and Zdzinski (2013) discussed about music environment at home, Hallam (2013) and Udtaisuk (2008) looked into family with music background while Brand (1986), Howe and Sloboda (1991) stated parents with music background has no relate to child's music achievement.

### **2.3.1 Home Music Environment**

Greenwood and Hickman (1991) state that, "schools are not the only institutions in society in which teaching and learning occur. The family is a critical institution and parents are teachers of their children" (p. 280) showing the importance of the home environment. Fagan, Brady Learn and Moss (1992) supports this, adding, "parents usually play a role as simply providing an instrumental and books for their child and attending school concert if their schedule allows" (p. 45). Moss also identified the importance of establishing a parent-teacher relationship. The project of which the research is outlined to provide an opportunity to the parents of elementary school students to play musical instruments in order to better assist their child at home, as supervisors, listeners, or even tutors.

Brand (1986) examined the the musical attributes and the musical environment at home among primary school students, and concluded that:

The home musical factors that affect the 'musical' children included: frequent opportunities for child to hear singing and records and the ability of mother and father to sing and to learn new songs. In contrast, environmental factors such as presence of a piano at home, study of applied music by parents and parental concert

attendance show very little relationship to children's musical response. (p. 118)

Fagan, Brady Learn & Moss (1992) later suggested that "I use 'News & Notes, A newsletter for parents' to help build an environment for music learning" (p. 45). The purpose of which is to keep them informed of concerts and events related to children or local orchestras. Zdzinski (2013) identified seven factors affecting the musical environment at home, which are: home musical structure, attitudes toward music, home musical environment, music program support, parental expectations, family musical participation, family musical background (p. 79). These seven factors are found to be similar even in general education, as found in other related literature. Even so, the musical home environment is seen as a separate entity as each has their own strategies. Hallam (2013) points out the different support a parent can offer through supervision, guidance, finance, or practical aid. Results show the time spent in learning, factors relating practice such as practicing strategies, self-management of practice, non-examination practice, examination practice and parental support for practice, there are altogether sixty percent of respondents mention that parents assist to practice.

### **2.3.2 Parents' Musical Background**

Hallam (2013) found family background and their parental support to be essential in the early stages of musical development in a child, stating that, "families who have musical skills and are interested in music seem to be able to transfer these values and interests to their children" (p. 207). Simply put, parents without a musical background or are less involved in their child's learning, may cause their child to lose interest far quicker than those that are more involved. Other literature have shown the direct relevant between a parent's musical background and their child's experiences and

abilities; Sims and Udtaisuk (2008) showed that “musically experienced parents provided more chances for musical play and practiced that did the parents with no musical background” (p. 18). Brand (1986) however found that it was irrelevant whether the parent had played a musical instrument in the past, therefore it did not affect their child’s musical achievement. Brand mentioned that “the best musical learning is achieved when the home and school work in concert so that the unique opportunities and social resources of home and school operate simultaneously and cooperatively to positively influence the musical growth of children” (p. 118). Davidson, Sloboda and Howe (1996) through children interviewees attending specialist music schools, revealed that most of the outstanding children who came from families where no one played an instrument.

Previous study by McClellan (2011) identified the relationship between parental influence and their child’s concept of ‘self’ as a future music educator; the personal interest of the parents and the support they give to their children in appreciating music have an important impact on their musical self. Through a series of interviews, Ho (2011) showed that parental involvement in their child when learning an instrument has a very complex relationship between parents and their child’s academic achievement and later career development.

An analysis by Sichivista (2007) found that students cultivated a better self-esteem in music when their parents were constantly engaging towards their musical participation, besides they were more confident in academic and social choirs; this however varies depending on the student’s age.

Shinichi Suzuki started the idea of parental involvement at the end of World War II, during that period he stated that three-year-olds children had the command of

vocabulary to start to learn strings (Fagan, Brady Learn & Moss, 1992, p. 45). Brady (1992) suggests ways to encourage parental involvement, i.e. attending their child's performance, being involved in their lessons. The study puts the blame on the lack of parental support and the ability to differentiate between teaching quality as a reason for the loss of interest in a child. Pedagogic competence is placed less importantly from personal warmth during the early stages of teaching (Davidson, Sloboda & Howe, 1996). Davidson et al. (1996) suggested that "parental encouragement through support is more important than musical skill in assisting in child's musical development" (p. 41).

Parental involvement relationships can be found among different measures, Zdzinski's (1996) examines the various factors of parental involvement, and he found that these aspects were relate to affective, cognitive and performance outcomes of instrumental music students. Affection outcomes strengthen as subject age increased, on the other hand, at the elementary levels, parental involvement affected the performance and cognitive musical outcomes.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Many researches have shown that parental involvement positively influences a child in different ways. Parental participation is not a new idea, however it has not fully entered mainstream education. Researchers have attributed positive outcomes in education and music to parental involvement. Parents can work with the school to benefit their child, as the knowledge of parental practices are definitely worth researching into; especially in the aspects of why and how parental involvement and their perception of it are beneficial to certain groups of children in music learning. In terms of early childhood music learning and parental involvement, there is a lack of

research from a qualitative point of view in looking into group music lesson such as in the case of the Yamaha Junior Music Course where parental accompaniment is compulsory. Thus, this study attempts to fill the lacking part in the literature by carrying out a case study of Yamaha Junior Music Course at Kota Damansara, aiming at what Geertz (1994) termed as thick description and qualitative data on the participants perception and behaviour in the area of parental involvement.

University of Malaya

## **CHAPTER 3 : METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This case study aims at gathering data in a holistic way from three main angle, literature, interview with parents and participant observation. Thus, this study is qualitative in nature that involve a case study. Interview method was carried out among the participants which gathered the demographic informations and their perception over their participation in their child's class. Video recording was used to observe the parent-student and parent-teacher interaction during lesson. The author, as an instrument in a qualitative study point of view, is also the teacher of the class and thus, able to provide a self-reflexive record on the participants studied, and also carried out a participant observation.

### **3.2 Qualitative Research Framework**

Bresler (1992) stated, quantitative study was supported by the scientific grand theory; this research method allowed researcher to look into the realities in various cases which able to place the researcher in a position to make formal generalisations and investigate about learning as well as teaching (Bresler, 1992, p. 67) and qualitative inquiry has its roots in the intuitive and survivalist behaviour of people (Bresler and Stake, 1991, p. 76). On the other hand, "qualitative researchers have a great interest in the uniqueness of individual cases, the variety of perceptions of that cases, and the different intention of the actors who populate that case" (Bresler, 1992, p. 67). As Bresler (1992) explained, "qualitative researchers are not devoid of interest in generalisation, but it does not dominate their thinking" (p. 67).

Qualitative research attracts attention of music education scholars in the last twenty years. Conway and West (2014) explain that qualitative research is developed through a series of criterium for evaluating itself in the music education or in a wider general education. Conway and West (2014) call it an 'Ethnographic procedure' in studying a field and the research design is normally flexible unlike the quantitative research.

In music education, formal music education research on quantitative methodology are reflected in thesis, books, reports, journals, and dissertations. While qualitative research is always used by researchers and practitioners, teachers and educators have always used qualitative observations to establish pedagogy that requires illusive observation of students in order to take note of problems and provide solutions (Bresler & Stake, 1991). It focuses on some cases to facilitate in-depth study of educational phenomena. It emphasises on the particular rather than the general (Conway, 2014) and it is especially designed to assist practice. It supports investigation of how reality exists independent of us.

Casey (1992) suggested that postpositivist qualitative research as an approach that music education should consider because it is very useful especially for observational research method in music education. Similarly, Abeles (1992) also mentioned that there are getting more and more interests among music educators in research method primarily used by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. The aim for qualitative research is not to look into reality but to construct a clearer experiential memory and to help people to have a better understanding, it is for music researchers to describe the current conditions concerning the musical nature of a group of people, a number of music objects or a class a musical events. This method also define music teaching and learning behaviours, develop instrumentation for measuring those behaviours and



enable the study of relationships among them. Cohen (1980) investigated musical gestures, noting how the children organised sounds into musical ideas by using videotapes for data collection, and such behaviour could be placed into three broad categories: exploration, mastery and generation of musical gestures. Whereas Johnson and Christensen (2008) said that it is important to be the 'instrument of data collection', involve as participants observation. Qualitative researchers are looking looking into deeply than is possible with questionnaires, with a structured interview the researcher assume questions are comprehensible and consistent in meaning across respondents. Unfortunately this method are costly to administer and time-consuming to analyse.

Bresler (1992) stated, "in actual life, no research study is purely qualitative or quantitative. In each qualitative study, enumeration and recognition of differences in amount have a place. And in each quantitative study, natural-language description and interpretation are expected" (p. 66).

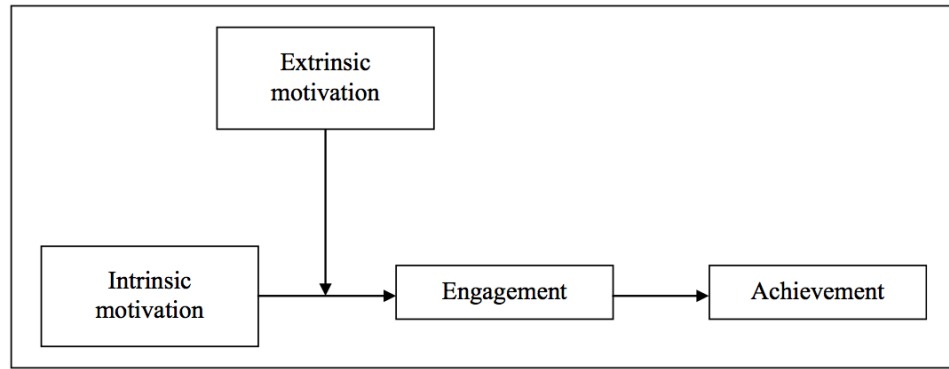
Miles and Huberman (1984) summarised that lots of weaknesses in its observations; descriptions with the indefinite language; incomplete and nonspecific descriptions of the research design; lengthy and full reports; implications of generalisability when little is warranted, cost and time overwhelm and unethical disturbance into personal lives. However, the strengths of qualitative study are impressive as well, those strengths as a holistic, systemic purview, stress on the deeper works and contexts; a strong, hands-on commitment to measure the description of teaching; a commitment and opportunity to get the most from fieldwork interpretations and understanding of use of empathy improving the utility of use for applied practice in education. These features have not characterised the majority of music education research in journals (Bresler, 1992). Therefore in the study, as a case study was selected, in order to have a holistic and in-

depth research, observe deeply to the patterns of behaviour, a qualitative research framework was selected. There were various approaches in music education used in qualitative research were discussed.

### **3.3 Ethnography and Participant Observation**

Qualitative approaches come with various names, ethnography and participant observation are chosen in this study. Ethnography and sociological fieldworks are the roots of qualitative research methods from end of nineteenth century (Bresler & Stake, 1991). There are two major approaches in ethnomusicology: standardised musicology; comparative study to record and analyse music, and anthropological speciality; to understand music in the context of human behaviour (Bresler, 1992). Ethnographers conduct research by describing the culture of a group of people and learning about them from their perspective. Researchers use holistic descriptions for the interaction of the members and how they come together to make up the group as a whole (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Garrison used ethnomusicological methods of extensive and intensive naturalistic observations in open ended interviews and photography (Bresler, 1992). The most common strategies in ethnography are participation-observation, interview and collection and analysis of written and non-written sources (Bresler, 1995).

Hatch (2002) states that 'life experience' of 'real people' in 'real setting' is the main research object in qualitative study. Thus, in this study, the field was a music school is located at Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya where the researcher is a teacher teaching the school. The ethnographic work was carried out for a period of three months from October to December 2015, and not limited to the specified date, the author's reflexive account was included in the study. The music school is located at Kota Damansara,



**Figure 3.1 Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation**

Petaling Jaya. This particular school conducts a number of music group classes for children aged 4 to 6. Group music lessons are conducted in studios, with 6 to 9 students per class and each accompanied by a parent in the least. The classrooms are fully equipped with keyboard instruments which is in the natural setting of the classroom for group music lesson, ordinary weekly one hour lesson and nothing is altered for this research except there is a video recorder. Researcher who also playing a role as teacher allows intimate access to the field and from an 'insider' point of view from an ethnographic perspective able to assist the researcher to gain access to the field with ease. One of the research purpose is to observe the parents' behaviour when interact with the child. Extrinsic motivation is portrayed when parents are involved in monitoring, enforcing, and guiding them with their work; intrinsic motivation is when parents react to their child's results by praising them or giving them encouragement. Study from students who are extrinsically motivated showing less satisfaction, persistence and initiation in their work while those who are intrinsically motivated able to take demanding tasks, curiosity and interested in learning (Gonzalez, Willems & Holbein, 2005). Intrinsic value looking on how children rate their level of interest or enjoyment they get when engaged in an activity (Ghazali & McPherson, 2009).

Most of the qualitative researchers draw on purposeful sampling which allows researcher to select information-rich, illustrative participants for in-depth study on

relatively small samples. The term purposeful sampling is by selecting information-rich cases are those which able to learn issues of central important to the purpose of the research. Qualitative research depends more on affluence of participants studied, observations and analysis of the researcher than on the size of sample (Patton, 1990).

Questions concentrated on the following areas as it was sizeable study that able to investigate different aspects in music learning, which were similar to a study by Davidson, Sloboda & Howe (1996, p. 43):

- Parental involvement in classroom
- Parents' role in the initiation of practice
- Parental involvement in supervising the child's practice
- Parents' own involvement in music
- Parents' own change in musical environment

### **3.3.1 Participation-Observation**

An approach used in this study is participant-observation. As a teacher in the study field, participant observation allows the author a thorough field immersion. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) explains that participation-observation is when the ethnographer participates progress the ongoing relations with the subjects in the daily routines of the setting, while observing the situation. The recruitment process involved four JMC classes at the location. Through convenient sampling, 20 copies of questionnaire were given to parents to collect the demographic details. Video recordings were taken during classes to observe student behaviour. The main point of naturalistic observation is the

closeness and first hand of data collection. The process of recording happen in a natural environment, well-defined, acquire an intense objectivity. The behaviour of parents and child in natural settings allow to observe class behaviour along a time line (Lytton, 1980). It is also to describes the current conditions concerning the musical nature of a group of persons, a number of music objects or a class of musical events (Yarbrough, 1992). Participants were interviewed in front of their own taped music lessons and further explained the reasons of their ideas on them, using participants' own words to prevent limitations (Odena, 2011). The video technique was from works by Silvers (1977) who used it in a study of children's culture, and Lennon (1996) who used the same method in qualitative study of piano teachers' thinking (Odena, 2001). In this study, the researcher playing the role of the teacher engages in the activities of the group, without a redirection of those activities. Observation was carried out while interacting with the parents and children. A video recording was also carried out to ensure that data can be reviewed after class for thorough coding purpose. The observer records hour-long lessons from 8 to 9pm on Tuesdays to Fridays, with an extra hour from 7 to 8pm on Fridays. The focus of the observations was on teachers' view on classroom behaviour to observe participants. During observations, a set of observational notes were formed as a guide to the researcher:

- Parent-student interaction
- Parent-teacher interaction
- Parents' behaviour

Parents' behaviour are important, the way they participate by asking questions, their concern on teaching content, and their difficulties during practice or lesson.

### **3.3.2 Interview**

In this study, interview was an important approach in data collection as parents' perception was revealed during interview. Interviews are conducted to capture multiple realities or perceptions of any given situation, to support the interpretation of the situation, and to collect observations that the researcher would otherwise be unable to make directly. With structured interviews, researchers assume questions are comprehensible while with semi-structured interviews, all that questions have already planned which allow some spaces for probing and following interviewee's feeling of what is crucial however they are time-consuming in analysis (Mishler, 1986). In open-ended interview, interviewers asked questions which usually doesn't know the contents of response which allows the participants to answer and share as much detailed information as they want to and at the same time the researcher get to ask probing questions after their sharing. However this interview approach has the difficulty with coding the data (Turner, 2010).

This research study included 20 in-depth interviews, that are consistent with typical qualitative studies. Requests sent out during each classes and all parents agreed to participate. Prior to interview and observation sessions, consent forms were signed by all informants and Mr Jason (Yamaha Encorp Strand retail division). Interviews were carried out among the 20 parents at a convenient location and suitable timing for participants, to facilitate the interview at a venue most conformable to the participants, most of the interviewees selected the music school. They were able to self-nominate by

signing up a suitable date and time for interview through google drive. Parent was interviewed alone but occasionally students wished to join the interviews. Interviews were constructed in English or Mandarin and lasted approximately one hour. Language choose depends on what the parents usually speak to the child. Their classroom learning weekly lessons were tape recorded to observe parents and students during lessons. All observations were conducted between October to December 2015.

The interview protocols have four categories that questioned participants about (1) their personal background and history, (2) their perception of parental involvement, (3) home-school interactions, (4) the effects of parents involvement in home-school communication. These protocols were examine on parents of the music school and interviews were revised after that and as data collected and analysed. Participants need to answer a brief questionnaire looking into participants' demographic information, such as their gender, age, occupations, educational level, and family structure. Interview questions included "What do you understand about parental involvement?", "What kind of music environment at home?". Interviews are conducted not as surveys of how people feel but to obtain observations that the researcher is unable to make directly and to capture multiple realities of any given situations and interpret what is happening (Bresler, 1992).

### **3.3.3 Setting**

This study was conducted in Yamaha Music School in order to focus more directly on the issue of parent involvement in class because this is a school that encourage and show a commitment to parent involvement. The design used in this study is a face to face interview with 20 parents of children of age 4 to 6 who are learning music. Parents

were questioned about their background and their child details. The second section is about parents' perceptions towards parental involvement. Parents were asked about their child's home music environment, parental assistance in practice and guild them during weekly music lesson. Pupils were observed during weekly class lesson, their playing and enjoyment of music making in class. Research by Peters, Seeds, Goldstein and Coleman (2008), were conducting a telephone survey about parent's involvement in child's general education. Research by Macmillan (2003), interview schedules for parents, teachers and students are attached in appendix about teachers' attitudes to parental involvement. According to Gene R. Medinnus (1967), interview approach was most frequently used during those days and been throughout the history of parent-child research. However, there are some disadvantages in interview method that yet to be resolved. For example typically interviews require the mother to recall attitudes that occurred some time previously. Respondents' unwillingness to discuss certain informations and some lack of communication between interviewer and respondent.

Interview techniques however have been improved to make sure more objective information obtained. The early researchers (Baldwin, Kalhorn & Breese, 1945) involved long interviews with mothers but the interview schedule has not published and it is difficult to figure out the basis for the ratings. On the other hand, a comprehensive interview by Sears, Maccoby & Levin (1957), the interview schedule is presented. Furthermore the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed and judges made rating after reading complete protocol. In Hoffman (1975) research, parents are required to give detailed description of parent-child interaction one day before the interview to avoid the long-term recall and distortion can be detected because of minor inconsistencies in the details reported. It shows that the closer the researcher gets to the actual behaviour and events, the more useful the data and able to link between parents



and child variables. Observation approach in parent-child relation was viewed as serious danger in destroying the real mother-child relationship by the process of peering at it. However, researchers Rosen, D'Andrade (1959) and Schoggen (1964) have successfully done the studies using observations with parents and children. Therefore, observations of parent-child interactions are superior to interviews, which in turn are better than questionnaires (Medinnus, 1967). Interviews give more flexibility and the ubiquitous interview and questionnaire on child are examples, neither strategy is the better and only one for all purposes, but it is important in either case that the concepts and techniques employed are sound. Questionnaires problem arises from the fact when the questions ask parent to rate herself and the child on likert-scales. This require a frame of reference of the other parents and children against with their own situation. Besides the referents for different parents are varies considerably.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

According to Tracy (2013), qualitative research is a good approach to study contexts that the authors are curious about them but they have no chance or never had a 'valid' reason for exploring and because of personal interests, qualitative data gives an insight and understanding into the cultural activities that might be missed or unnoticed in structured surveys or experiments. This study also part of the researcher's query when having issues with parental involvement during class that affect the classroom climate.

Qualitative data is perceived as rich data, and they are complex (Taylor, 2005). According to Tracy (2012), there are three core qualitative concepts including self-reflexivity, context and thick description are included in qualitative study. Self-reflexivity taking into consideration of the researchers' experiences, their own point of

view as well as the roles influence these same researchers' continuous reflexive communication and interaction between researcher and the research subjects takes place in. In this study, the author is the teacher whom taught the Yamaha JMC for 3 years. Reflexive writing was used in order to furnish details of the author's experience in parental involvement and the interaction between parent-teacher, parent-children was observed. In the context concept, it is to determine the small cues that control the behaviour and to make compatible context and have deeper knowledge about the culture. The context was set to the Yamaha JMC textbook and guideline was examined and there appeared to be a lack of details instructional informations to parental involvement.

'Thick description' employed by Geertz (1994) in ethnographic study is when researchers make themselves immerse into a culture, examine the certain circumstances and move closer to the statement and theories (Tracy, 2013). Brennen (2012) explains that thick description allows an in-depth interpretation of social behaviour and drawing context to a particular social code. Thus, this study involves detailed observation examining the interaction between parents' behaviour and how this influence their involvement in the JMC between parents with child, parents with teacher and some parents without interaction. During interview, the parents' statements were also carefully analysed. Thus, in this study, data gathered from various approaches such as interview, participant observation and video recording analysis. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and video recording were transformed as notes along with participant observational notes written during classes. These data from various sources formed rich data that required careful coding. The data were coded and re-coded in reaching data saturation, as how Ravitch and Carl (2015) described as when the analysis comes to an end. Data triangulation was performed as conforming codes captured from

various source in attaining data reliability. Thus in the analysis, data from participant observation, interview, video recording were analysed and coded together with references to the literature.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this study, employing a qualitative research by using various approaches, it was found effective in generating a holistic and in-depth datas in answering the research objectives that examine Yamaha JMC's requirement of parental involvement, parents' perception over their involvement and to identify patterns of behaviour by focusing on parental involvement in JMC.

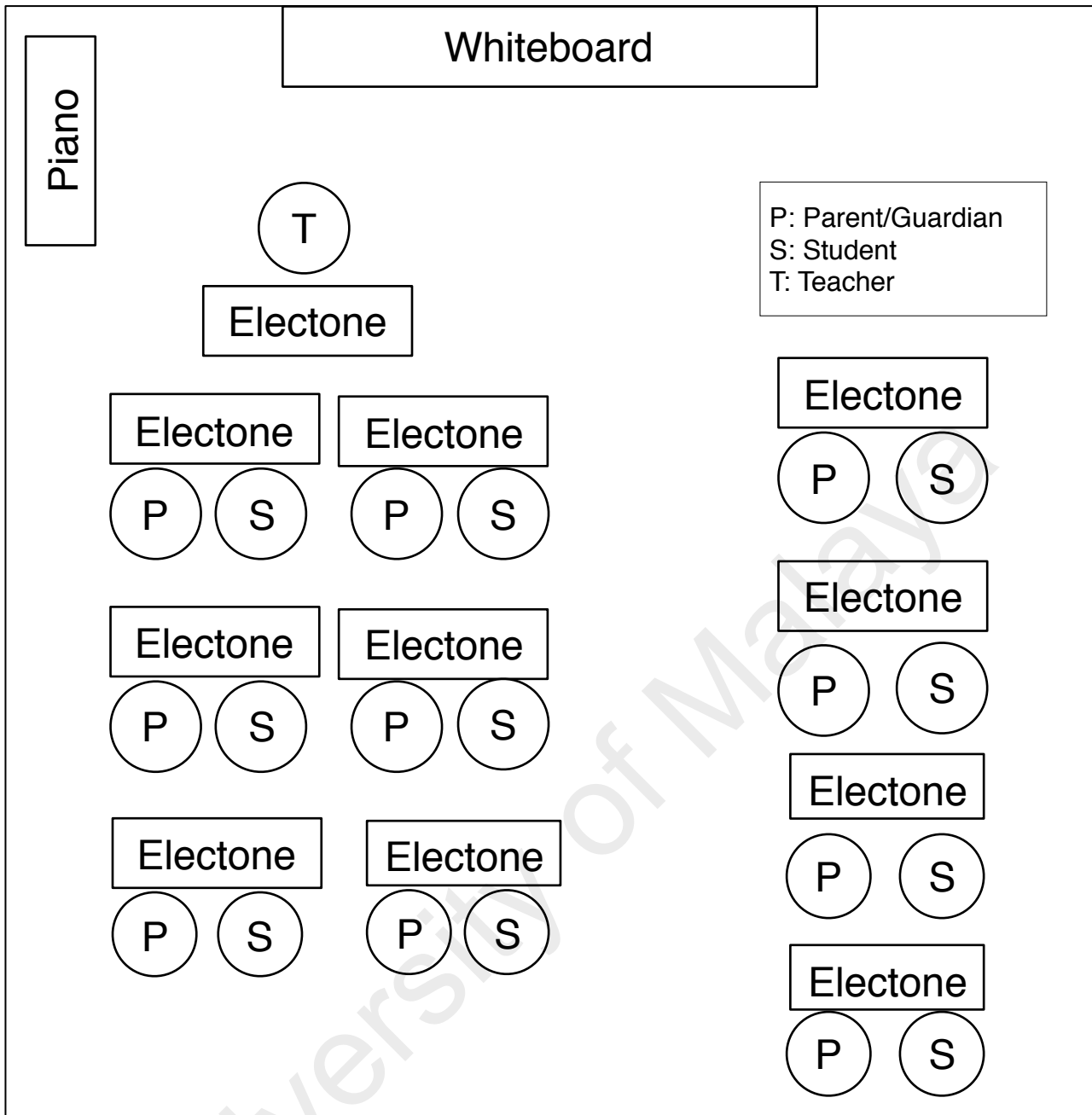
## **CHAPTER 4 : FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This study involved 20 parent-student pairs enrolled in the Yamaha Junior Music Course located at Kota Damansara. Emphasis was placed on parents, as they were probed of their musical upbringing (if at all), the extent of apprehension towards the role they play in the classroom, and the justification behind supporting their child in music education. Their uncontrived behaviour in the classroom was also observed and documented. The data collected was later analysed, and will be further discussed in this chapter.

### **4.2 JMC Setting and Course Description**

The first research objective in this study is to examine Yamaha Junior Music Course's requirement of parental involvement, data were collected from various sources such as Yamaha teacher's guide, Yamaha Corporation website, JMC textbooks and workbooks. The Yamaha JMC is a 2-year long course designed exclusively for children between the ages of 4 and 6. These hour-long group classes hold up to a capacity of 10 students and are held weekly, entirely conducted in English. Students are each provided with an electronic organ, while teachers are provided with a more advanced model of the electronic organ, alongside a traditional acoustic piano. The fundamental concept behind the colourful, visual-rich JMC method is imitation and repetition. Instead of technical finger dexterity (of which is still of importance), emphasis is placed on the foundational elements of music, namely comprehension, hearing, singing, and composition. Students are taught to see music in a comical light; they are free to express



**Figure 4.1 JMC Classroom Layout in Kota Damansara**

and enjoy music (Yamaha Corporation, 2016). JMC is a two years course and children need to sit for Fundamental Skills Survey to end the course. The survey is like a checkpoint for student, parents as well as teacher to confirm their achievement in JMC, including hearing, singing, playing, reading ability, and children's good balance of "musical sensitivity", "fundamental music ability" and "musical expression", it creates a goal and they have credence in future music leaning. (Yamaha Music Foundation, 2007).

#### **4.2.1 JMC Syllabus**

The JMC consists of 8 components; keyboard subjects such as keyboard repertoire, keyboard games, keyboard harmony; lyric singing, memory singing in solfege, rhythm, music appreciation, and music rudiments. Students are provided textbooks, workbooks, CDs, DVDs, and a student learning kit; these materials are obtained from Yamaha schools as students are enrolled into the courses. Each subject in JMC has the significance purposes. Keyboard subjects are to develop the basis keyboard performance, keyboard games are able to arouse the interest and keyboard harmony develop the sense of harmony. Lyric singing arouse the child's interest in experiencing various musical expression. Solfege singing is to enhance hearing ability, children understand various music elements through singing in solfege. Rhythm ensemble and step able to foster sense of consistent tempo. Music appreciate is to cultivate manner of listen and appreciate the variety of tones and expression in music. Music rudiments are to develop the basis of writing and reading the music notes (Yamaha Music Foundation, 2007).

Children learn the music by listening and singing in solfege and then playing the music on the electronic organ. Solfege acts as a medium in which music is taught through the JMC method. The fixed 'do' component cultivates a sense of pitch that is usually lacking in keyboard-based syllabi. Students start by listening to and singing along with the teacher; later they play the corresponding music on the electronic organ phrase-by-phrase, again led by the teacher. Pioneers of the method claim that this shared aural perception is optimal in children between the ages of 3 and 7, and can drastically increase the ease of learning pitch, rhythm, and harmony, akin to language acquisition (Miranda, 2000).

During the JMC, Yamaha teacher has the lesson plan that keep the children moving every 10 minutes. A lesson involved a few transition from their electone to the acoustic piano and standing in front of the classroom to have some activities like singing, dancing. Consideration to the young children's physical development, these kind of activities are suitable for them (Miranda, 2000).

Parents play an important role in the classroom; they are requested to be present during every lesson. The purpose of this is so that they are able to review they week's lesson, and recreate the atmosphere in the home; reinforcing the lesson outcomes. They are advised to take notes on pieces taught in class as per the teacher's directions. A typical piece of repertoire is taught on separate hands with the student (and parent) closely mimicking the teacher. Later, the parents accompany their child by playing the alternate hand with them, and vice versa. This is to ensure the parent is able to effectively assist their child while practicing at home.

Aside from keyboard playing, the JMC syllabus rounds off with activities that foster music appreciation. Parents are invited to participate in group singing and dancing, alongside their child. Rudimentary theory of music is also taught; parents are required to assist their child in any homework given on the subject, sometimes the workbook may even state exclusive instructions for parents. Some short instructions or reminders were given at the corner of some pages to inform the parents how to do and what to take note of. For those pages without instruction, verbal instructions from teacher is needed.

In a regular JMC weekly lesson, the one-hour lesson is well-planed by teacher before class depending on children's progress and make sure the syllabus for a book is fully taught in 6 months. JMC class usually started off with singing after parents and child arrive and settle at the electone. Sometimes teacher proceeds around the classroom,

greeting the child while checking for their homework. When doing solfege singing, children were invited to stand in a row beside the piano while parents remain seated. Children usually sing as a group but sometimes each student get to sing a short fragment of a song especially when teacher needs to check their pitching. Singing are usually in phrase by phrase. It takes around 5 - 10 minutes and children get back to the electone and prepare for the keyboard pieces. Singing comes before playing, children sing the entire piece in solfege. There are different registration for every piece that every instrument has their own tone characteristics. If it is still a new piece from the previous week, teacher usually do imitation play for right hand, then left hand and student imitate closely phrase by phrase. A lot of repetition takes place in this subject especially comes to new piece. If the hands separate parts are good, they will proceed to simple ensemble playing which few students play accompaniment and the rest play the melody. If they are doing alone, the approach is the child play left hand accompaniment only and sing the melody and finally they play both hands. Towards the second half of the lesson, children get to do another singing session with a harmony singing or lyrics singing with actions. Homework is usually assign right before the class end and sometimes is to check homework and lesson ended with a song.

### **4.3 Participants Demographics**

In order to achieve the second and third research objectives: to identify patterns of behaviours from parents and to discuss parents' perception over parental involvement in JMC, data from twenty participants and their perceptions over JMC were gathered. In this case study, twenty participants (3 fathers and 17 mothers) took part for individual interviews (Table 4.1). The participants included parents from different backgrounds, who are in their 30s and 40s. Most of the parents agreed to participate, share their



opinions and experiences. There were 7 males and 13 females students. Among 17 mothers, five of them were full-time housewives, while some the others were self-employed and some had full-time jobs in diverse sectors. As mothers participated more than father we can assumed that because of the job as a housewife was more flexible and they are the one who accompanied them most of the time, according to Field (1994), it was because child spent most of the time with mother which can be considered the primary learning environment for the development of emotion and behaviour regulation. Mother's role included reading the infant's signals, providing optimal stimulation and arousal modulation that allows the child to remain organised behaviourally. Child also imitated their mother's behaviours, read mother's signals during interactions. Therefore, mother and child's interactive were most likely to appear harmonious when the behavioural attunement is achieved during their early interactions. Most interviewees had 1 to 3 children in the families and most of them were english speakers at home. Yamaha JMC lessons are conducted in english and all the JMC materials are printed in english, therefore children were able to follow and understand instructions easily during lessons.

**Table 4.1 Demographics Information**

	<b>Interviewee (Role)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of children</b>	<b>Educational qualification</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Primary language</b>
1	Mother	38	2	SPM	Housewife	Cantonese
2	Mother	33	1	Diploma in music	Piano teacher	Mandarin
3	Mother	33	2	Certificates CFP	Secretary	Cantonese
4	Father	43	1	Degree	Engineer	English
5	Mother	36	3	SPM	Nursery Manager	English
6	Mother	37	2	Advance diploma	Real estate agent	English
7	Mother	33	2	ACCA	Housewife	English, Mandarin
8	Mother	42	3	-	Part-time clerk	Mandarin
9	Mother	-	2	-	Housewife	English, Mandarin
10	Father	42	2	University	Medical	English
11	Mother	36	2	Degree in engineering	Housewife	English
12	Mother	37	3	Degree	Sales manager	Mandarin
13	Father	34	2	Degree	Engineer	Malay
14	Mother	43	2	Degree	Manager	English
15	Mother	-	1	-	Self- employed	English, Mandarin
16	Mother	35	2	MBA	Project manager	Cantonese
17	Mother	-	1	Degree	Banking	English
18	Mother	40	1	Degree	Director	English
19	Mother	42	3	Masters	Doctor	English
20	Mother	46	1	Professional ICOSA	Housewife	English, Mandarin

#### **4.4 Parents' Exposure To Music**

As outlined in Table 4.1, twenty parents were asked about a series of questions regarding their interests, qualifications, proficiency, preferences in music and also their experience in attending live performances. During the interviews, most parents described themselves with a higher level of interest in music and they were more inclined to listen to music. However, through the collected demographic data, these parents were not necessarily proficient in music or even not proficient at all. Those who claimed themselves to have high interests and high proficiency in music are those with a music background and musical qualification. A number of parents were not inclined to attend any performances themselves or expose their children to music performances.

Results through the interviews showed that 15 participants listened to music in a car (radio/CDs) most of the time. When asked about their preferred musical types or genres of music, there were mostly pop songs and children's songs. 9 parents stated they had no interest in singing; however, the rest of the parents enjoyed singing and they sang for their child. Parents mentioned they were easily influenced by their child's song preferences. However, in the previous research, it was pointed out that there was a generation gap between children and parents despite most of the parents supporting their children's musical participation (Ho, 2009). 14 parents mentioned they received a musical upbringing, most of them had experiences playing an instrument. The most musical being was participant 2 who stated that "I play piano and my husband plays guitar, both of us at diploma level and we are music teachers." Another 9 participants mentioned that piano was the instrument they were exposed to. 3 students already picked up a second instrument besides group music lessons, stated by the mothers (Participants 2, 17, 18).

When asked about the frequency of the concert experiences, results shown that only 3 children and parents (Participants 14, 15, 17) attended live musical performance once and majority of parents never attended or hardly attended any performance. They claimed that they had no chance or no idea about the concert happening around. The only concert that parents participated was the child's school annual concert where children usually dance. Through this situation we can assumed that, it was probably because parents may not think of others musical activities for child other than providing them a proper music lessons and instrument. Most children also had their music lessons or performance arts in school. In addition they may not pay attention on attending live concerts that were not directly related to child's music lesson and practice. Children probably were also actively involved in many others activities such as sports, arts, dances, language classes, tuitions besides their formal school academic.

In the research, results gathered that all the parents were not actively involved in any live musical performance and not all of them had proper music lessons before but they supported their child in music and accompanied them in class. This study supported Davidson, Sloboda and Howe (1996) found that parents of persistent music students were not generally engaged in higher level musical activities themselves but the family support is vital. As such, findings were corresponding with earlier research by Brand (1986), Zdzinski (2013), Hallam (2013) had positive correlation between children's musical success and musical environments scores at home. Other researches (Ho, 2009; Leong, 2008; Zdzinski 1996; Brand 1986; Fagan, Brady, Learn & Moss 1992; Macmillan 2003; Creech, 2010) shown outcomes on the frequency of attending concerts and performances. Parental involvement in general education serves a similar purpose in music education. A direct relation between parental involvement and the outcomes and achievements of their children has been done in other researches. Parents academic

involvement helped in adolescents' educational and career aspirations but it was inefficient in changing child's behaviour or achievement in school. Therefore parent academic participation increases aspirations and the educational and occupational aspirations are not necessarily (Hill et al. 2004) and it was similar that parents with or without music prerequisites can help in child's aspirations in music. In this case music education seemed to be perceived as something that would contribute to general education of a child.

#### **4.5 Parents' Perception of JMC**

In answering the second research objective, data were collected in examining how parents' perceived the Junior Music Course (JMC). All Yamaha JMC parents know that they were compulsory to attend the class with child weekly, one of purpose of this study was to discuss parents' perception on their attendance and involvement in JMC. Yamaha music foundation believed that parents attendance able to let parents appreciate the significance and teaching points of each songs, so they could review and repeat (practice) at home. During the interview, out of 20 participants, 17 mothers signed up and participated. Mothers were likely to be a constant presence and accompanied the children to class as well as their practice at home. From the parents' point of view, most of them mentioned that they enjoyed attending class with the child, when they were asked about their thoughts of having the parents attend the class with their child, most of them think that it was good and understand the needs, their explanations:

"I do not disagree, I understand the needs. Parents should be actively involved." (Participant 5)

“It is good. I managed to pick up some when I attend with him.” (Participant 4)

“I enjoy it and I am learning too and now I know a little bit about the notes.” (Participant 13)

Throughout the course, there were two parents who did not accompany their child, and when asked about their opinions, their explanations were:

“I think it’s good actually, at least you can see child’s progress. Because I have to take care of the youngest son, it is very difficult to bring him to class, so I ask my eldest one to attend.” (Participant 8)

“It is good, I used to do that but I’m now too tired to attend. Because I attended with my son and I’m now tired to attend the class and not interested anymore.” (Participant 9)

Results gathered from interview were mostly positive about the request of parental participation. Mothers had never attended the class at all; however they still mentioned that it was good for parents to attend the class. The older siblings are the one that accompanied them. Through the reasons provided by mothers, we can assumed that the mothers themselves were not interested in music, in fact they have no music background and experience yet they thought that music was necessary and good for the

children. Through the class observation, the two children were accompanied by older siblings who were currently studied music were able to follow and participate, however they argued about some details, and fought. Studies mentioned siblings are a attachment in the family lives and they act as each other daily lives as their mates, friends, enemy and as a centre of social comparisons. Studies were looking into siblings perform as a role models (Brim, 1958, cited in McHale, Updegraff & Whiteman, 2012) and studies documenting the younger children imitating their older siblings more than the reverse (Abramovitch, 1979, cited in McHale, Updegraff & Whiteman, 2012).

During the interview session, interviewees were asked about his thoughts of having the parents attending the class with their child and the importance of his role in the classroom, provided his explanations:

“Beginning definitely important, otherwise they wouldn’t concentrate and when go back the problem is to practice, they can’t really tell us and to see her progress and to guide her I supposed. My wife doesn’t have much background in music so it is a bit difficult for her.” (Participant 10)

The father also pointed up when asked about the importance of parents with music background and answered:

“Yes I think it helps a lot because it can keep them in focus and guide them even not in class.” (Participant 10)

A mother also mentioned about the lesson matters when she discussed among other parents:

“Some of them (parents) say it is good joining JMC, some say it is not good because of group lesson and some of children can’t concentrate but for my son he is able to concentrate.” (Participant 3)

Parents perceive their role as to assist child’s focus of attention during class due to their young age. Preschool children were typically able to attend one activity that catch their attention for around 10-15 minutes and during that period they were able to concentrate and remove distractions that happening simultaneously in the environment. If they find it too challenging or tough for them, these children may able to do a classroom activity for only 5-10 minutes particularly, therefore adult’s guidance was important to have them stay on task. According to Jean Piaget, a psychologist specialising in child development; intellectual development is divided into four different periods that are significance in children’s cognitive structures. Child aged 4-6 considered the intuitive stage of the preoperational period. Children in this stage were not able to have reversible thinking and they can only concentrate one dimension of the problem, which appears to be prominent at the moment (Hetherington & Parke, 2003). Through the interview conversation, parent thought that their background in music was able to keep the child focus, another parent on the other hand, thought that the child could concentrate and learn on their own. Previous study by (Davidson, Sloboda & Howe, 1996) found that students able to continue their learning despite their parents’



musical ability. It can probably be that different child has different characters and needed different guidance and supervision.

Yamaha JMC designed the lesson plan which keep the children moving from their electone to teacher's piano or to the front to perform some singing and dancing, or interactions with parents like holding hands with feeling the beat, the transition usually happened in every 10-15 minutes depending on their levels. It keeps the child active by avoiding them sitting through the lesson. Nevertheless, parents may need to put some efforts to keep the child focus. Perhaps due to the advance technology nowadays, most of the children spend their time watching television or gadgets and it brought up by parents during interview. Parents commented:

"I try to create that kind of practice environment but maybe my fault too, I let him watch too much TV." (Participant 11)

"He always like to watch TV, play with iPad but not practice that's the problem." (Participant 13)

Parents were fully aware of their child's habit. Brown (2011) recommended that children aged two and below should not be exposed to television whereas older children should only be watching television with a maximum two hours in a day. The more they watch, the higher the chance they experience problems of paying attention in class. Young children have no idea on differentiating between virtual and real events. Children who watch television also spend lesser time in creative play and less time interacting with parents and siblings. Moreover, despite the programs that claimed that there are the

educational programs, there is no proof that they are actually learning from these program (Brown, 2011). The most important of all, parents are responsible for these and set a good example for the child. Perhaps setting up a good routine, figure out a regular routine that suit the child. Interacting more with the child, perhaps through mental and physical exercises to help their concentration; try boardgames or such to build their stimulate their thinking and focus; besides physical exercise was proven by research saying that children that do exercise are more likely to perform well in school, better focus and more positive (Nichols, 2011).

Most results from interviews shown that parents emphasised on the importance of their roles in the lessons, therefore their behaviour in the classroom was an crucial factors that need further determined (refer to Chapter 4.6). Besides, through the interview, there were parents who wanted their child to concentrate on their own rather than parents guiding them, part of the reasons was because of those parents were not musically inclined. Comments from mothers:

“Lessons are getting difficult too. My partner and I also don’t know music. I want my child to be independent.” (Participant 3)

“Yes, but I feel stressful because I don’t have any musical background. I want her to concentrate and listen to teacher.” (Participant 6)

Results from study showed that most parents think their attendance in class was needed for young aged students which also supported by the earlier research of Howe and Sloboda (1991) that showed persistent learners initially need extrinsic motivation

by parents and children's motivation became increasingly intrinsic with time. Children's interest in their music ability may increase when they thought that parents were supportive and encouraging (Sichivitsa, 2007).

This study found out the various purposes for parents enrolled their children to Yamaha JMC. Through the interviews, the reasons for most of the parents who sending their children to junior music lessons was because they wanted to provide the child a solid music education. Followed by the next reason was friends' recommendation and they wanted their child to expose to music at young age; parents did not have chance to learn back then. The reason that had the lowest rating was that parent wanted the child to cultivate a hobby, using music to keep them occupied during leisure time. Most parents believed that a proper music education was the most important reason for sending child to music course. Parents wanted the child to learn the basic skills in music like piano playing, singing, notes reading. It was an additional skill that parents wanted the child to pick up rather than just academically and they also believed in Yamaha music school. One of the interview participants explained the reason she joined Yamaha JMC:

"I definitely want my kid to learn music and when she knows piano its easier to pick up other instruments. Its better to start early. I have confidence in Yamaha music too." (Participant 15)

"I enrolled her to JMC because I did not have the opportunity to learn, for my husband part, he wants her to have something solid, we believe Yamaha music is a solid music education." (Participant 5)

Other researchers (Leong, 2008; Dai & Schader, 2004) pointed that most parents believed that a well-rounded education was the reason for providing music lessons. Parents and teachers seem to have a similar idea of a 'well-rounded' education, stating during interviews that was enables the child to have some basic skills in every subject area and results suggested that parents send their children for music lessons were for more general educational value rather than musical talent development.

Providing a solid music foundation for children was an important factor whereas there were parents who initiated music lessons were influenced by friends. They compared group music lesson to individual piano lesson and most of them joined group JMC because they thought it was more interesting. They were looking for an enjoyable learning environment and Yamaha course able to proceed till higher grade compared to other courses. Parents also preferred to let their child exposed to music at young age to observe their interests in music, and their first choice of instrument for their child to start off is usually piano. Hoffman (2014) mentioned that the reason to start with keyboard is because it is simple and children can start the lesson as soon as their hands and fingers have the size and strengths to play on keyboard. Piano is a well-tuned instrument unlike strings or woodwinds that require breathing control or exact fingers placement on strings that may be quite challenging for child who might not have the sense of pitch yet whereas piano produces the right sound once you press the key. The right pitch is important and also the wide range of pitches that easily let the children expose to melody and accompaniment playing and lastly they have a good chance to feel the contrast of dynamic range from loud to soft that excite their emotion and

performances. When mothers were asked about what made them enrolled their child into the Junior Music Course, they answered:

“I thought that individual lesson is too boring and my friend recommend me to JMC”. (Participant 6) Another mother answered “Because one of my friend is a piano teacher in Yamaha, teaching in Singapore” (Participant 3) and another also mentioned “...my friend told me Yamaha courses can achieve till higher levels unlike Musikgarten”. (Participant 9)

These were various factors that affected parental supports, results shown that parents without music interest were also keen for their children to learn music. A Malaysian researcher (Ghazali, 2005) also pointed that a majority of Malaysian parents whom have no formal musical knowledge who indicated that their support of music was because of the desire to provide their children with an all-rounded education. Through parents’ comments, they most probably believed that music education was as important as other subjects studied in school and they thought it was essential to achieve till high grades. Another factors that made some parents supported their kids for music lesson was because they themselves missed when they were young. A mother commented:

“I already planned with my husband because I didn’t have the opportunity to learn so I want my child to go for music.” (Participant 20)

Another reason was parents wanted to ensure that their children are kept occupied at home with musical practice or to cultivate their hobbies. A mother provided her thoughts:

“I want to make sure she has a hobby, my elder daughter I send her to drawing class. My choices are normally drawing, music or dancing, for them to pass time. So they don’t do nothing at home. I choose JMC because it is kind of like ‘branded’, and it is a group lesson; better than individual and I not sure what instruments she likes in future, so it is good to join music class, to let her expose more. I want to make sure she has interests.” (Participate 14)

Through the interviews, it is common to hear that parents sending the child for music lessons were to reframe their unfulfilled ambitious. Researchers (Brummelman, Thomaes, Slagt, Overbeek, Castro & Bushman, 2013) found that parents are more likely to have their child to succeed in achieving their own failed ambitious when they see their child as part of themselves. However nor is it known whether pushing kids to fulfil parental ambitions was harmful or not. We could probably assumed that parents whom did not get an opportunity to learn music felt less disappointment about their own lost opportunities and make way for fulfillments through their children or put pressure on child to excel in music. Another reason for parents who sent their child to music lesson was to keep the child occupied their free time at home. Study by Malaysian researcher also stated that a large amount of parents in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia initiated music lessons mainly to full up the children’s free time and they did not advocate the idea of long-term aims for their children’s music education (Leong, 2008). During interview,

parents mentioned music as a hobby for the child. We assumed that they were not taking music as a proper subject and most of them had no decision for sending the child for tertiary music education. Perhaps it was related to education system in Malaysia, that music was not treated as a core subject in school, for example in one of the nationwide examination in Malaysia, Malaysian Certificate of education (or known as SPM) that is similar to the O-level, music studies was just one of the elective subject for art stream students. This situation might affected parents see not much music values for music lesson and rather just for children to pastime.

#### **4.6 Patterns of Behaviour and Communication**

In meeting the third research objective: to identify patterns of behaviour by focusing on parental involvement in JMC, data were collected via interview and observation, and an analysis was reported in this section, study shown a two-way communication: parent-child communication and parent-teacher communication.

##### **Parent-child Communication**

A few traits of behaviour were discovered in parent-child communication through observation and interview and researcher analysed how these may contribute to the learning environment as positive climate and negative climate that is in aid to their children taking the JMC classes. These observed traits of behaviours are: motivation, affirmation, authoritative, permissive and disengaged parenting.

##### **Motivation**

Through the three-month observation and interview, a noticeable positive behaviour was the act of parents motivating their children. The behaviour that received the most

number of codes was parents giving compliment to their children as an act of motivation. During interview sessions, almost all parents mentioned about complimenting and praising their child. In author's observation, majority of the parents attending the JMC in this cases were female, where mothers spent more time with the child and it was observed that they were able to interact better with child. As Field (1994) observed, mother's roles in helping the child establish their behaviour and psychological organisation consists of reading the child's signals and providing optimal stimulation. Therefore, mothers spent more time with the child and they were able to interact better with child. During interview when the parents were asked about complimenting the child, they answered:

“Yes, when she does well. We definitely do compliment her. No rewards.” (Participant 10)

“When he practice at home, if he does good, we compliment him.” (Participant 13)

Most parents thought that compliment is an effective way to motivate children. From the interviews, parents that answered with ‘we’ reflects the situation where both parents were supportive in giving compliments to their children. Similarly, during the class, it was observed that many parents gave a smile followed by a nod to the child as a sign of compliment. The children were seen responding positively by giving a bright smile to the parent and show more confidence in the playing by singing along loudly. These responses from children created a positive classroom climate. Parents were seen reacted to students' performance by giving encouragement and praise delivering a higher



chance of intrinsic motivation, when this happened during the class, children responded immediately with better interest in learning and taking up challenges.

This finding relates to previous research about relationship between parents' participation and student motivation in the United States (Gonzalez, Willems & Holbein, 2005). Besides, Creech (2010) in the study of parental support of learning violin in Britain also found that students have more behavioural support and the impact of learning outcomes when parents responded to their music achievement with praise. In addition, the act of parents telling the child what exactly they enjoyed about his or her performances was also an act of motivating the learners. Parents who were committed to the lesson as observed, in their effort of following the class and monitoring their children's achievement such as what could have done better or what had improved, showed a sense of belonging to the class where the children did not feel alone. Looking deeper into the context of an accompanying parent in the class with the above positive traits of behaviour, when a child was sitting in for the lesson with a companion of supportive mother or father, the researcher observed a sense of 'home' where the child feel that the environment is closer to home. When the parent acted as a tutor, such as reminding their children about teacher's instruction, the author observed that the children may feel less intimidating as a familiar person – the parent – was always at their side supporting and motivating them. The kind of bonding between an accompanying parent and a child in a class gave an emotional benefit to the child observed by the researcher as a positive climate especially for children at a young age of 4 to 6.

However, it was also found that there was a rare case where a mother perceived that motivation is effective when it comes from comparison. During an interview, one of the

parents, a mother, recommended her way of motivating her child by comparing with other children:

“I motivate her by comparing with other friends for example she has a friend in school who play violin and perform in school concert as well. I also told her that she is so lucky to have a piano at home. I once invited my friend to my house and play, my daughter was so impressed. My daughter’s progress is under my expectation.” (Participant 20)

The interviewee also responded the same during class as observed by the researcher. When the daughter did not perform well, she pointed at her classmate and asked the daughter to observe how well was her friend’s playing compared to hers. However, the outcome during observation of setting up a competitive culture between two children at the age of 4 to 6 may not necessary bring upon positive outcome. The author found that after some time when this trait of behaviour was conducted by the accompanying mother, the daughter performed below the teacher’s expectation compared to other children. Through the class observation, this particular mother was not happy during class most of the time while comparing with other children’s achievement. The mother expressed disappointment when her daughter could not play well. This resulted in another form of behaviour where the daughter constantly looked at her mother during lesson especially when she played a piece fearing of disappointing her mother. This particular situation nearly shows that the child’s self-esteem and confidence level decreased where the author suspected that the child feels stressed up when the mother was constantly compared. She did not appear to enjoy the class.

Referring to the various writing in the past literature such as Ersoy (2013) and Goodwin, Arredolo and Brown (2000), where body language and gesture is effective in giving motivation to children. Thus the author when observing this situation with the child who was constantly compared to other children by her mother, tried to give a 'thumb-up' gesture even though when the child was not doing the best. The attempt brought a positive outcome when it was observed that the child became more confident and willingly increased her number of attempts at the challenging part that she was playing.

Another competitive behaviour was observed during interview with parents, a mother commented about her child get frustrated when she encountered obstacles and difficulties:

"She will practice by herself until she has difficulties and she cries. She gets frustrated easily. She will try when facing obstacles and started crying when she can't do it." (Participant 2)

Through the conversation, it shown that the child felt negative about herself by throwing tantrum and negative emotions. Researcher Ames (1984) found that children who failed in competitive situation shown negative behaviour towards themselves, and lesser sense of satisfaction. Ames's research also examined that children with higher level of fulfilment and contentment reported to have better thoughts on their own capabilities. Perhaps parents need to work with the child until he or she learns to ease off. Praise the child's effort and comment on the part they can be improved. Parents might need to rethink their own reactions towards the child when the child unable to

cope. Research also said that some parents took their child's personal success upon themselves to make sure the performance due to the competitive society nowadays (Bess-Lima, 2013).

The author learned that in this scenario, a negative output may not necessary be reciprocated with a negative form of advice, instruction or gesture such as telling the student that she did not perform well, or asking her to pay attention to her peers who could do better. In fact, by constantly motivating the child by giving compliment may work the other way round over a mistake, such as the use of a thumb up gesture at the time the student is about to fail a task. The incident called for the attention of the author as a teaching member, to imagine the child in a learning environment of a group class with his or her peers, parents, and teacher, may be intimidated if a negative climate was created, therefore, a thumb up gesture and other form of compliment may motivate the child as he or she may feel encouraged to proceed even with a challenging task, if given enough assurance.

Besides, the author also suspect that as the children began their JMC in a group class setting, perhaps music lesson can be a good opportunity to build a child's confidence, if careful measures were taken to create a positive climate. Children were able to learn to express themselves through music, especially during lesson; when they were performing as a group, their efforts were heard and understood by parents and other friends. This was witnessed by the author as an important step in developing young children's self-esteem.

Thus, by giving encouragements, compliments are the good ways to motivate and boost children confidence, contrastingly, some parents choose to motivate children by rewarding them. However, there was a particular trait of behaviour that caught the

author's attention – a reward for participation. In other words, children participation in work or class was in exchange for gifts. Through the class observation, when parents wanted the child to participate or perform and the child refused to, parents offered to buy them things and immediately the child participated. Similarly during interview, parents also mentioned that they rewarded them in order to motivate them to class. The child was given an embedded meaning, as how the author perceived, that any effort creates an opportunity for material reward. On the parents' side, the act resulted in reinforcing.

Parents might want to be careful of material or tangible rewards. According to Nauert (2015), material reward during childhood may lead to problem in the future where the child grew up following the tradition that they will continue to reward themselves in the future. Another study by Deci, Koestner and Ryan (2001) added that tangible reward, as an extrinsic reward may decrease intrinsic motivation; while verbal reward was proven to be significant in increasing intrinsic motivation. Although these researches were conducted and their results proven, however, the findings disseminated in the form of academic publication did not reach the society as we can see that some parents were unaware that material reward may form a negative climate in a classroom or home setting. Study found that verbal rewards had positive effect on children's self-reported interest (Deci, 1999 cited in Henderlong & Lepper 2002), however some data collected were criticised for the methodological weaknesses (Camron, 1996 cited in Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). When it comes to the two parents (participants 8 and 9) whom did not attend the class, the act of complimenting and motivating their child were absent in both interview and observation data.

## **Affirmations**

Affirmation was another trait of behaviour observed during the class as another type of parent-child communication. Parents were seen making sure their child understand, concentrate and listen to teacher's instructions during class. Some forms of action were observed that lead to positive classroom climate:

- singing along with the child
- parents constantly guiding on hand posture by showing or correcting his or her hand and finger position on the keyboard
- pointing at the notes on the book as a guide to direct attention when the child is playing on the keyboard
- taking down notes from teacher's instruction

Singing along was found effective as an act of affirmation. In JMC, there are activities such as solfege singing, playing on the keyboard or harmony singing. It was observed when parents sang along with their children, the children were seen more assured in their singing and playing. There were occasional times when a particular child nearly missed out on rhythm as the author observed, he could quickly followed up as the parent was singing beside him too. In terms of playing on the keyboard, some parents were seen singing along the solfege by imitating teacher, the children were seen more incline in playing along. For harmony singing, parents figured out the chords together with the child by humming.

In terms of guiding on position, it was observed when the child was playing in wrong position or wrong notes, parent immediately corrected it by moving the finger, and the

child was able to continue his playing in a group. For guiding child's hand posture, it was observed that parents hold the child's wrist to make sure the fingers stayed curve. Some parents were seen reminding the child on the posture a few times during lesson. In addition, another act of pointing over notes written on the book when the child was singing and playing, a few parents were seen pointing at the notes and in the meantime looking at their child's playing, the children were seen more focus and look at the music notes while playing.

Some parents also appeared busily taking down notes from the class. As opposed to those who were always on their mobile phone, or appeared distracted, or bored, or as the previous section discussed – passing around the role between husband and wife to attend the class, the form of act engaging in notes taking created a positive environment that reflect the importance of the class to its viewers. As this particular act was conducted in the class, the author felt that some other parents who did not do so previously, also followed on the positive act and began taking down notes. Some parents were observed writing down the solfege on top of the music notes in textbook while some noted down subjects and song title that were taught. There were several times where parents asked about certain notes that they missed out when teacher sang.

However, there was an occasional special case where too much affirmation from a parent may create a negative outcome. The author termed this as a faulty 'knowledge transfer scheme' in JMC. For instance, there was a child who could not follow the teacher's instruction and relied on the mother. After some time observing the pair, the author suspected that it may not totally be a weakness from the child, however, extreme participation from the mother in taking over the role as a teacher during a class may resulted in a form of a behaviour where the child relied only on her mother's

instruction. During interview, a parent stated that her participant in the class is actually very important to her child as the child is relying on her for class instruction and tutorship:

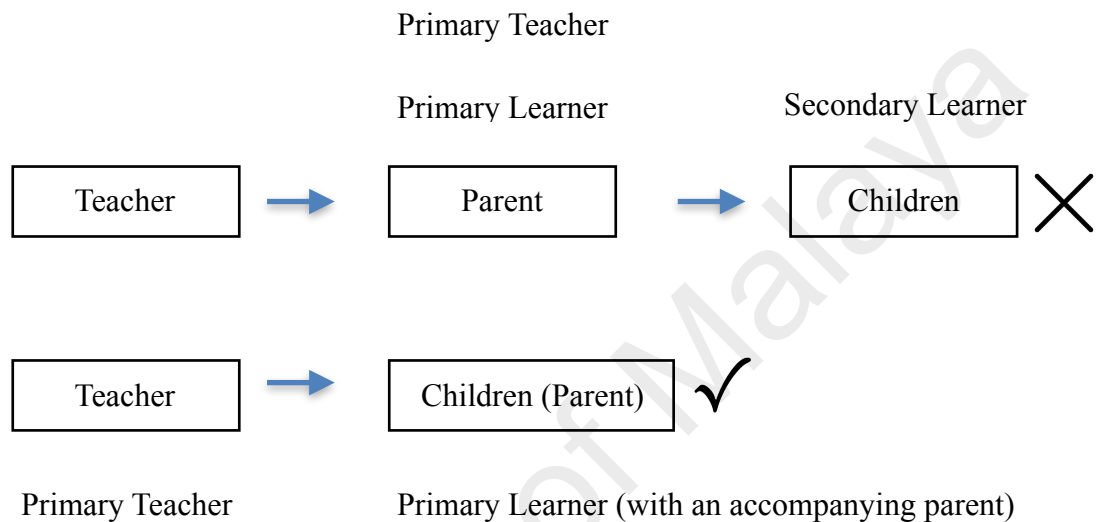
“He depends a lot on me, waiting for me to help. Sometimes we are not clear of the fingering, he can’t see. I need to take notes too.... I myself not sure sometimes.” (Participant 1)

The same situation happened during observations, the parent and child progressed slower than their peers in class because the mother always made sure that she gathered all the teacher’s instruction, then only convey it to her child. When time passed, the child took up a behaviour where she no longer followed the teacher’s instruction, and always waited for her mother’s.

Children such as the one described, were most likely to have extrinsic-oriented motivational, they depended on external factors for advice and children rated as dependent, self-determination, satisfaction in their work (Gonzalez, Willems and Holbein, 2005). Generally, teachers and parents stated that it was better for parents to be actively involved in children music lesson. However, from the author’s observations, there should be a balance between parents’ and teacher’s role. Parents participation may be better in the case that they do not completely take over the role as a teacher, or overreacted during the class by being the active learner instead of the child, by asking questions even when the child succeed in completing a task although it was the parent who do not understand, excessive notes taking, and making sure that they themselves (not the child) know how to perform the tasks required by the teacher, while their child



remained as a passive secondary learner in the class, waiting for the parents to master the skills or lesson content, then only participate in the activities or tasks requested by their parents, instead of the teacher (see Figure 4.2)



**Figure 4.2 Knowledge Transfer Scheme in JMC**

When teachers were giving instructions in class, children should learn to pay full attention and follow instructions, therefore it is best that the parents take a secondary role as an accompanying adult by not to give orders or interrupt the primary learner during that moment. It was not surprise to see excited parents performing as a primary learner in the class, because the role of parents in JMC learning progress was never recorded in the text book or any other form of written guidelines for the parents to refer to.

During the author's observation, some parents practiced a habit to repeat teacher's instructions to the child. Obviously, after some time the child formed a tendency of not

paying attention to teacher and they anymore and tilting their head and attention towards their parents only. The worst scenario observed for 10 times (33 classes observed) during the period of this study were:

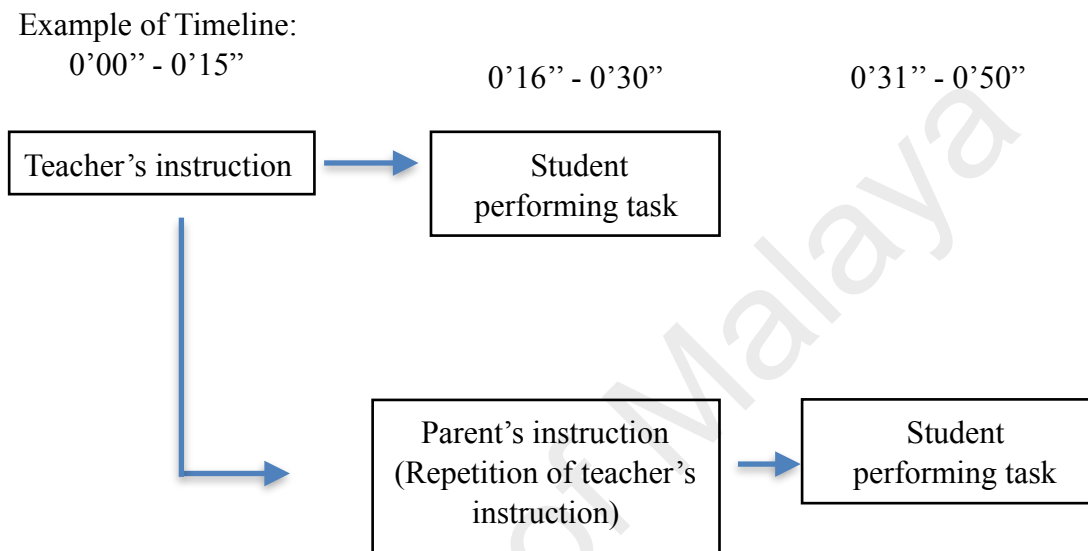
- Parents gave the wrong instructions and informations to the child
- Parents were too busily engaged in giving instructions to their children after the teacher

In the first scenario, it caused time for the teacher to stop and reminded both the parents and children about the correct instruction and information. There were situations when parents were confused about certain instructions. Teacher need to constantly listen to their playing and look at parents and children facial expression and their interaction, when they frowned or their eyes went looking around at the children beside or the teacher, that was the time they needed guidance. For example, when the author (teacher) was teaching on chords playing at the middle 'DO' and a parent was putting the child's hand at one octave lower.

In the second scenario, taking an example, there was a parent whom repeated the whole instruction given by the me where the instruction took 15 seconds, where I was speaking to the class the following statement:

“Children, get ready your right hand, finger number four on 'RE, remember to curve your fingers. Ready, one, two and play”.

This statement was completely repeated by the parent to her child for another 15 seconds simultaneously when the other students were ready their hands, right after each of my instruction. I termed this as a ‘staggered teacher-parent-student communicative pattern’ (see Figure 4.3) and considered it as a negative classroom climate in JMC.



**Figure 4.3 Staggered Teacher-parent-student Communicative Pattern**

Whereas during interview, these parents mentioned their difficulties included:

- Their child depended a lot on them
- Parents need to take down teacher's instructions and guide their children a lot
- A lack of time for note taking
- Children progressed slow in class

The above reveals a list of consequences of ‘staggered teacher-parent-student communicative pattern’ in JMC, however, not realising that this is the cause of the outcome, parents feel stressed up during the class. The parents would then take over the primary teaching position instead of the teacher (see Figure 4.2). Therefore, a child became less independent and less adaptive to a teacher, an external family members, may cause a lot of consequences such as becoming a habit where they may face problems in other classes or at school in the future. At the same time, parents felt lots of pressure and this type of scenario created a negative classroom climate.

### **Authoritative, Permissive and Disengaged Parenting**

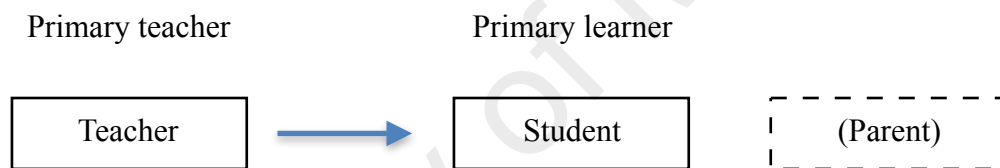
Another trait of behaviour coded from the data in identifying behaviour in the parent-child communication category was the disengaged parents who encouraged the child to self-direct their learning and be independent. These parents (Participants 3, 5, 6, 18) did not assist and instruct their child much, a mother provided her explanations:

“Lessons are getting difficult too. My partner and I also don’t know music. I want my child to be independent.” (Participant 3)

Differing from the staggered teacher-parent-student communication pattern, these parents were hoping the children to become more independent and confidence in their music learning. From class observation, positive climate can be seen, the child participated in class by themselves and parents accompanied them as in scheme 2 in Figure 4.2, by making sure the child followed teacher’s instructions. An autonomy-supportive parental behaviour witnessed in the observation was more suitable for the

JMC setting. Besides, previous researches also proved that the authoritative parenting style were more likely to have independent, self-reliant, sociable, well-behaved and academically successful students (Mcpherson, 2009). The authoritative parent also very responsive and support the children emotionally and less likely to control children through the induction of shame, guilt (Dekovic & Janssens, 1992). Parents focused on the processes to be enjoyed in learning and child's effort rather than fixed ability perceptions (Mcpherson, 2009).

However, there was another trait of behaviour that adds another scheme to Figure 4.2 observed, a passive parental involvement in JMC class (see Figure 4.4).



**Figure 4.4 Passive Parental Involvement**

Some children observed were not independent enough to pay full attention during class and to perform task by themselves, at the same time, parents were not giving in guidance. According to EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), child's life between birth and aged 5 is an important stage, where in this stage, the children should be joyful, interesting, exciting, enjoyable, protected and parents need to support and concern about their child's development and learning needs (Walker, 2012).

In the study, the pairing of parents with less involvement and less independent child faced difficulties in class and regularly portrayed a seemingly unambitious expression,

such as, reluctance to perform a task, having difficulty concentrating in class and not interested to learn or to improve. Through interview, an explanation provided by a mother when asked about her communication with child and problems during class:

“Yes, but I feel stressful because I don’t have any musical background. I want her to concentrate and listen to teacher. Sometimes, she will be like dreaming and randomly pressing the keyboard. I actually don’t know if my daughter is playing correctly and sometimes she only practice some songs that she is familiar with.” (Participant 6)

“It is difficult for me because I don’t have any music background like reading notes, bit difficult to follow.....I’m not paying so much attention.” (Participant 19 )

When data triangulation was performed, in the observation data, these parents were not involved in child’s learning and they performed the following behaviour:

- Prolonged use of smart phone or other mobile devices
- Yawn regularly in an unreserved way
- Late for class
- Constantly questioning about their children’s interest in music

The first three traits of behaviour were major factors causing a negative classroom climate. Since the launch of smart phone, the behaviour of prolonged usage and tilted head over the phone screen becomes a norm among many people. Parents who were

constantly checking on their phone showed a clear detachment from the child they were accompanying. Besides, as reported in Sandström, Wilen, Mild, and Oftedal, (2001) the various symptoms of mobile phone use may cause headache, discomfort and other health problems. Thus, mobile phone using parents observed in this study, although not a tested variable with evidence, may experience physical lethargy by constantly checking on the phone or prolong mobile device screen reading, where the researcher suspect that it may contribute as a factor in the detachment to the child's lesson. In other words, the physical body of the parent is beside a child, however, there was no communication in supporting and helping the learning child.

The second behaviour, constant yawning by parents may create a negative classroom climate too. As how Caswell and Neill (2003) described, yawning is commonly known as a sign of lethargy and boredom. Concerning thick description, a yawn may carry many meanings. In the case of a worn out parents, they may be showing determination to come to class despite their physical tiredness. However, some parents observed, performed an unreserved yawn and probably unintentionally attracted attention of other parents, children, and also the teacher. This created a negative classroom climate and it may reflect different meanings to the perceivers, for example 1) the JMC class is boring, 2) the teacher's teaching is boring, and 3) the parents cannot wait for the class to finish. Unreserved yawning also may be seen as a form of intentional body language addressing these three propositions to their perceivers. Broadbent and Petrie (2007) stated that body language may cause an effect to its perceiver, such as someone scratching on his or her arms may results in the perceiver paying attention to his or her own body parts that itch. Other research shows that yawning is contagious and usually during the daytime (Giganti & Zilli, 2011). Thus, unreserved yawning by parents may cause negative outcome during the class and this was regularly performed by parents

who were obvious in not paying attention to their child. Parents who paid more attention to their children with more communication (verbal, or eye contact) were seen less in yawning.

The lack of punctuality in attending the class was another negative case observed. This resulted in missing out lessons content and interrupting the class with question. The other trait of behaviour performed by less involved parents was constantly asking whether their children were interested in music or not. This repeated behaviour of questioning a child's interest level in music was a challenge to the teacher. The teacher observed that these parents were most of the time detached with the child, showing lack of engagement in supporting and guiding the child, and not paying attention to the class and the child. While on the author's observation, the children of these parents may not necessary behave like the uninterested parent. Some of them were keen to learn however, when meeting with difficulty, they did not get the support from their parents compared to the other pairs showing communication. The author found that there were some scenarios observed gathered that some children showed disappointment and came to a halt when they failed to perform a task, however, watching a non-reacting parent led them to react the same.

Thus, the author (teacher), in performing thick description, was not sure in interpreting the aim of such parents repeatedly asking "do you think that she is interested in music," although the teacher had regularly replied to the parents positively. The author deciphers the behaviour, asking this particular question repeatedly by a less engaged parent, as an act that may bring different meaning:

- merely asking to show commitment in the class



- losing confidence in the child's interest level based on the parent's lack of interest
- a worry over the fees paid for JMC attended by a child who is not interested

The parents whom asked this question repeatedly seemed to be lacking in confidence about the child's progress and interest level. However, when the parents were very much less engaged in the class and not giving support to the child, their confidence level naturally may be at stake because they were not paying attention at all to the child even he or she is making positive progress.

Results on parents' behaviours and attitudes showed the differences between parents who assisted and those who not responsible for children lesson and practice. Some parents claimed that they did not have high level of music competence and therefore they were not able to assist the child. However, committed parents never responded the same. Furthermore, the content of JMC class is designed for beginner and young children and thus it is not an advance music level that may be difficult for a parent without music background. These parents were not aware about the importance of parents' commitment to assist their child. More importantly is that children along with parents guidance received a feeling of comfort, security and encouragement.

In addition, a background of learning an instrument in the parents' demographic may not be a factor in giving better child support in JMC. Some of the parents who showed positive behaviour during the class successfully manage to deliver a positive and enjoyable environment to their children during the JMC class. These parents sometimes sang along, gesture their children, or showing a supporting expression such as a smile or nod. As Brand (1986) explained, parents need to understand that the fact that a parent

had learned a music instrument did not affect child's interest or achievement, whereas parents' behaviours towards music were crucial, for example singing with the child, providing a proper instrument, learning some songs together. Researchers Howe and Sloboda (1991) also found that students who performed better in music school were having supports from parents with not much formal musical knowledge but with giving lots of encouragement and supports. Parents were responsible for assisting home practice and encourage them to have good practice habit rather than assist them so much in class. From this result, we can assumed that these less-engaged parents did not see the point in assisting and guiding the child during class.

There were also some less engaged parents but at the same time, gave a positive feedback over the rules of parent accompaniment during JMC. To these parents, it was a way to provide emotional supports to the child. When asked about their child's behaviours and performances in class, they said it was depend on child. Mothers commented:

"I don't want to pressure her too much but I think she is unable to cope because her concentration is not there and did not try her best. I want her to concentrate and listen to teacher." (Participant 6)

"I think she is better than me, she catches up much more because I'm not paying so much attention in class." (Participant 19)

Through the class observation, these category of parents did not do what some other parents did, such as taking note during class. In worse scenarios, they may be absent

from the class from time to time, or coming to class late, or looked away with an expression that they were carried away with thoughts. Some husband and wife took turn to attend the class and they faced another difficulty as they could not follow the classes they missed out. Yet, these parents were keen on asking about their child's progress and implied that the child should be the one to full responsibilities on their own learning and be independent.

Authoritative parenting in contrast, reveal an opposite of disengaged parenting. It focus on an important parent-child communication came stemming from concern over children's practice in ensuring their progress and performance. During the interviews with parents, the most frequent question about communication with child that brought up by majority of the parents was home practice. Parents commented:

"Yes, I force him to practice. Everyday, 5-10 minutes." (Participant 3)

"She normally plays twice for a piece, that's all. I usually force her to practice before she watches TV." (Participant 15)

"He will tell other things but I have to force, sometimes if he really tired we do it on Thursday, so at least practice once before lesson. I try to create that kind of practice environment but maybe my fault too, I let him watch too much TV." (Participant 11)

While transcribing the interview, the word 'force' immediately grabbed the author's attention as it was highly rated during coding. As from the interview, parents emphasised that they need to 'force' their child to practice.

Authoritarian parenting calls for minimal negotiation with strict set of instruction (Orkin, 2008). Windle (2015) explained that the parents' background during school day becomes an influence to the way they are authoritative parents. Orkin (2008) explained that authoritarian and didactic disciplining may be similar but the latter may be more warmth to the receiver end as how he described. Asmussen (2012) explained researchers found that didactic instruction is better in getting the children to participate in activity. Thus, some of these parents mentioned in this study believe that 'force' is the approach in improving their children's practice in a form of 'positive disciplining.'

Parent's intervention in this type showed positive outcome during class observation. As a continuous data triangulation was performed, I crossed checked these data during the class and observed the children from parents who claimed that they use 'force.' From the observation, these children that were forced to practice actually progressed positively, and it was obvious too that the parents did not have to then intervene too much during the class as they had practiced at home. Furthermore, I observed that the children enjoyed attending lesson. Their enjoyment could perhaps be very much linked to the fact that they were able to performed task given during class and this built a positive environment. The joy that children experienced only when they immersed into a piece of music. These parents claimed that they did not struggle when they forced their children to practice and it was obvious that the natural interests for music was retained in their child.

Whereas it was frustrating for some other parents who could not get their child to practice even when they mentioned that they used 'force'. Since the study focused on parents perception and the limitation of the research did not cover an observation at their home environment, the researcher could not confirm how the authoritative act of 'force' failed in these parents. There was a tendency parents think that their children are interested in music when they refuse to practice. It was normal for children to avoid practice. However, parents could rebuild their interest by trying other practice methods and consult the teacher. Study by Bugeja (2009) on parental involvement in Suzuki lessons reported that mothers who accompanied the child in Suzuki lesson had no issue encouraging the student to practice at the beginning of the learning period as those mothers initiated the practice without setting a practice time and the practice was done daily. Orienteering the child towards habitual practice requires time.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, found that Asian-American students have better score in reading during the standardised test at high school senior level compared to white students. There were forty-four percent of Asian Americans hold a Bachelor's degree while in the white population, there were twenty-six percent (Kseal, 2010). Previous study by Fynn (1991, cited in Dewar, 2011-2012) analysed the past studies of achievement and IQ, he discovered that environmental factors affected Chinese attainments. It is about asian parenting style, there are some believe that Asian students have an outstanding performance in classroom is not how they are born with and everything has to do with how they are raised. Asian parents had made education one of their children's top priorities (Kim & Abboud, 2005). This is similar to Windle's finding in authoritative parenting in an Australian context (2015).

A balance between authoritative and permissive parenting is still hard to achieve and there are pros and cons of each. Steinberg, Bornstein and Vandell (2010) explain that the former highly expect their children to perform while the latter gave more freedom to the children. During interview, there was a parent (participant 19) mentioned that they never force the child to practice, and never force them to fully concentrate in class, provided her explanations:

“I don’t expect them to sit up straight all the time, she is a bit playful. It’s ok for her age, she is quite attentive. I don’t force them. I don’t set a time to practice, exactly no. We don’t force. It’s a bit difficult to get her sit down and practice. I try to sit with her whenever I can but if she doesn’t want to normally I don’t force her. I don’t want her to lose interest.” (Participant 19)

The permissive parenting style of this parent believed that forcing too much leads to loss of interest in music and it was normal for them to loose concentration in class. Whereas through observation this particular child was actively participated and enjoyed in class especially in singing, music appreciation, notes reading however she showed lack of confident in playing certain pieces. Thus, a clear difference was observed in the outcome of the student progress in the JMC classes in this research between authoritative and permissive parents.

Previous study stated that the extrinsically motivated students came from parents’ who constantly involved in monitoring, enforcing with homework, eventually lead to students who were less initiation, less self-determination and less contentment in their homework (Gonzalez, Willems and Holbein, 2005). However, there are also other

studies focused on parents should actively involved and parents' beliefs about the importance of helping with homework or homework helping strategies and influenced students' outcome. (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Wilkins 2001; Ames, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Research focuses on classroom behaviours between parents and children which has the following dimensions: positive and negative classroom climate. This setting can be described as in the students supported each other and they expected one another to do their intellectual best with the teacher (Shapiro, 1993). These supportive behaviours of parent-child communication created a positive classroom climate.

A child spent most of the time with parents and the way they communicated and interacted with each other were the important factors that nurture a child's attitudes. According to Munakata (2014), executive function able to assist children in all kinds of ways throughout their daily lives, it helps changing between different activities rather than doing only one thing, therefore it is extremely important, it able to stop themselves from shouting and yelling when mad, to delaying satisfaction (Barker, Semenov, Michaelson, Provan, & Snyder, 2014; Munakata, 2014). Whereas through the interviews and observations, there were positive and negative climate outcome from both authoritative and permissive parenting, however, disengaged parenting remained the most inefficient.

### **Parent-teacher Communication**

Parent-teacher communication was another item observed and studied in order to fulfil the research question of how parents participate in class. Some forms of parent-teacher action were observed that lead to positive classroom climate:

- regularly discussed about the child's practice and homework
- asked about lesson details for certain subject
- choosing the right instrument

Through participant-observation, some parents regularly discussed about the child's practice with teacher after class. This is a crucial issue which most parents concerned and constantly asked for advices; both during interviews and class observations, their questions are mostly how to make them practice, the ideal practice hours, hard to get their interests. Parents asked for advice to get the child to practice or asked the teacher to encourage the child to practice as some of the parents claimed that the child only listen to an outsider. In the situation when teacher directly communicate with the child, they were seen to nod their head and more willing to practice as they promised.

Child's homework was part of the thing they checked twice with teacher before leaving the class. For the workbook, instructions were given to parents in certain pages, however there were not direct enough for parents to understand. Some parents would like to get the answers from teacher in advance, it was right after class then it became easy for them to guide the child, or in an another way, teacher needed to guide them by showing the homework that assigned was related to whichever page in textbook. Parents preferred to let the child to take the initiative to ask questions.

Nowadays parents also created a group chat; included teacher and all the parents from the same class, which was a space for them to ask homework, changed of lesson schedule or examination schedule or any other issues and activities. Especially when it is near to the exams and concerts, teachers can easily update them about dateline for



registration, venue that takes place, dress code and documents needed. While for regular lesson, parents can simply drop a message saying the child is sick, busy and not able to attend, usually teacher will send a brief lesson plan to update the parent. It is beneficial to the child as he or she can still prepare and practice before the next lesson.

Some parents asked about lesson details after class, for example the repertoire pieces subject, parents would clarify and asked for the proper position especially for new pieces or new positions, they wanted the teacher to check again the child's playing or certain pieces that the child was not fully understand, such as they checked on which fingers to start off (Book 1 and 2), when they moving to higher levels (Book 3 and 4), they need to know which position to move to or certain section that need to stretch their fingers.

For other subjects like solfege singing, some parents would choose to write down the solfege however most of the parents would just listen without further question, it might be because of that subject was usually taught with children standing in front with teacher, around the acoustic piano. For some subjects like music appreciation that needed parents be involved with child by doing some movements, parents might not be sure how to do if they did not pay attention, therefore teacher need to invite them and instruct them what to do. In some situation, especially in higher levels, parents said that they themselves have difficulties to remember how to play, they asked for permission to record the child's playing after class while teacher was guiding them by the side. Parents would also request to attend the class early; like 15 minutes before the lesson begins, to let the child practice with the teacher. This request happened when the child missed the previous lesson or the child's progress was slower than the classmates. Partly because it was a group lesson and teacher would not provide individual assistance all

the time and would not pause the syllabus either just because one child didn't not able to catch up.

In the second year of the JMC, parents started to ask for the future plans for the children. There were a few parents thought that after the child graduated from JMC and they need to change to individual class or when they are halfway learning, they have an idea to change to individual class rather than group class. Teachers might need to spend some time to show them the flow chart for the Yamaha education that allow them to progress from JMC (4-5 years old) all the way up to the highest students' grade which is Grade 6. Besides parents need advices regarding the differences between group classes and individual classes and their advantages and disadvantages.

During interview session, parents preferred to talk to teacher personally when they really having difficulties in class. Therefore, it was good that parents need to take the initiative to ask and assist their child. For parents that claimed that they had no time and no interest to attend the class seldom asked about lesson details but they concerned about the child's performance in class. Howe and Sloboda (1991) found in their study saying that parents communicated with teachers even they did not attend the lesson in order to set the practice goals. Previous research has investigated that parents who are actively participated in school events easily builded a good relationship with teachers, therefore the children with actively involved parents had lesser problematic behaviours (McCormick, Cappella, O'Connor, & McClowry, 2013). According to Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008), the purpose of communication could be building relationship, giving information about the individual or the school, school home alignment and working together to create something different.

Choosing a right instrument for child is also a hard decision for parents as there are so many different brands and models of piano in the market. Parents usually asked for advice from the child's teacher, which was the best instrument to buy for the child. Surprisingly there are parents who refuse to get the child a proper instrument, the reason was they could not be sure if the child has an interest. However parents need to understand that the quality of the instruments may be affected on the child's enthusiasm to practice. Majority of students were using keyboard, acoustic piano at home and a few of them had electone, and electone was the main medium for children in JMC and therefore some children and parents get confused when practicing as electone is in two layers.

Parents' had a great responsibility and taking initiation on child's learning whereas teacher was also playing an important role. Howe and Sloboda (1991) have looked into the role of teacher and found that teachers in early stage have greater influenced based on their personal characteristics rather than their proficiency in music. Teachers not necessary need to be a good performer but they need to have high quality of personal warmth (Howe & Sloboda, 1991). The way that a teacher conducted a class could affect the whole classroom environments. In order to make the children interested and be alert in learning, teacher should get to know all the children's names, take note of the strength and weakness of each and every students; compliment their strength and improve their weaknesses. Teacher's own characteristic is also important, be humorous, expressive and energetic, add some exciting tone, varied volume in speech. Eye-contact is needed to catch children and parents' attention. Making eye contact with all the children during class, smile and main eye-contacting when the child is not paying enough attention; nod when they do the right thing and make sure be consistent in treating all the children. Call their names when they are not concentrating, so that

parents and other children also be alerted; call their names and praise them, so that other children knew what are good about that student and they imitate their friends. Children's development may be enhanced with their friendship, their characteristics may be magnified when they have higher quality of friendship. Researcher have found different features of good friendships, such as loyalty, better behaviour and self-esteem (Berndt, 2002). For parents' side, making eye contact with parents and noticed their expression during class, if parents frowned or hesitated when guiding the child, assistance from teacher is needed, teacher might want to represent that part to the whole class so that the particular child can be picked up or teacher might need to step forward and assist the child. Frequently asked questions especially before changing to another subjects and give a constructive way to parents so they are able to repeat the same playing procedure at home.

Obviously parents and teacher are the important environment factors that benefited in the initial stage of learning music, they gave the feeling of encouragement, comfort, peace of mind (Davidson, Slobodan & Howe, 1996). In other words, parents and teachers have traditionally nurtured different domains of learning; teachers responsible for emphasised formal cognitive learning experiences while parents expected to nurture the child's emotional feelings and appropriate societal behaviours. Research proved that extramusical factors such as behaviour, assistance and attendance, affect many music student's grades (McClung, 2000). Findings through observations and interviews supported by previous research by McCormick, Cappella, O'Connor, & McClowry (2013), stated that teachers with more emotionally supportive present a positive emotion, they were aware of and responsive to students' needs and parents were able to interact and voice their concerns with teacher comfortably. Past research also proved that parents' communication with teacher every week is important, children can have

better intrinsic motivation. Teachers' practices and strategies for communicating with parents can influence parents' beliefs, attitudes, and involvement (Ames, Stefano, Watkins & Sheldon, 1995). However, research by Macmillan (2003) about teachers' attitudes to parental involvement in piano learning discovered that there were teachers who did not wish the parent to attend the class or guiding the child's practice. The teacher strongly discouraged the parents to be involved as she wanted the children to take piano lessons as their own thing. This study also discovered that only those teachers with special pedagogical courses (Courses in Kodaly, Suzuki, Dalcroze and Orff) have positive attitudes on parental involvement whereas the others with music diploma qualifications have negative attitudes about parental involvement.

Involvement from teacher and parents were associated, a main effect for academic achievement, relatedness to parents and teachers was also predictive of school motivation and adjustment (Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994). Furthermore, parents' and teachers' emotional and instructional supports were the important factors that created a positive climate. Similarly, teachers who were fully aware of children's needs, led to better interactions with parents and allowed parents to have more communications about child's problems and progress. It created a sense of continuity, common values and goals (Lasky, 2000).

### **Non-communication Involvement**

There were a number of parents who did not have much communications with the teacher, their behaviours were spotted during observation, however, differ to the behaviours observed in disengaged parenting. Through the observations, these parents did not assist their child but they were making their own references. They usually noted

down the registrations (instrumentations) for different pieces, as well as noted some music notes as some of them were not musically inclined. Besides music notes, parents also noted down some performance directions, such as tempo marking, articulations, dynamics marking, especially when teacher emphasised and written on board during lesson. Parents also video recorded child's playing through their smartphone, some parents voice recorded the child's or teacher's solfege singing for a new piece instead of writing. It became easier for them to revise at home. There were a few of them (participant 1, 12, 14, 17) had an extra notebook for them to write down important aspects for every subjects that learned weekly. The notes were more like a guideline for parents.

Through the observations this study, while parents were taking their own notes as reference, their child was participating teacher's instruction even though without parents' assistance. These behaviour generally created a positive learning environment as parents able to keep track on child's progress and were not overreacted. Children aware that parents were also concentrating with them during lesson. Unlike those permissive and disengaged parents who did not assist much during class, they were looking at phone, yawning, late for class, these forms of action definitely affected the child's concentration, the child easily get distracted by parents despite that they still concerned about child's learning by giving moral support, financial support, occasionally discussed their progress with teacher and hoping to get the teacher to pay attention to the child. However, we could observed these parents themselves were not fully interested in music but they wanted the child to learn.

Previous study by (Bugeja, 2009) also found that there were some mothers who involved in child's Suzuki lesson constantly took detailed notes when the student first

started learning. Contrasting there were mothers “just watched” during lesson and teacher have the responsibility and did the writing for them. There were some similarities from these findings compared to the class observation in this study on the parents with not much interaction.

During the interviews, some parents expressed their views that they were impressed with child’s progress, however they were not involved in child’s learning. A mother mentioned:

“As for me because I don’t have any music background like reading notes, bit difficult to follow, I think she is better than me, she catches up much more because I’m not paying so much attention.” (Participant 19)

“To be honest, till this level I find it difficult for me too, but as long as he can play I am okay with it. If really having difficulties I will need to ask you personally.” (Participant 7)

The above parents accompanied without much interactions and instructions, they claimed that it was difficult for them, the child was taking responsibility of their own learning, at the same time, these children needed more attention from teacher, or teacher need to take note of their facial expression when conducting the whole class.

In addition, there were parents did not know how to guide the child and complained that their child showed lack of interest in their music learning. A mother commented,

“I actually wanted to stop him (his music class) previously and my husband has no interest in music. My elder daughter used to learn piano for about 3 months but refuse to practice so my husband stopped her lessons. My husband side’s family don’t encourage music, they have no interest. I didn’t really guide him and I myself not sure sometimes. He doesn’t want to practice, I wanted to set a time but I can’t, I always running out of time.” (Participant 1)

Children interests in learning music can come from supports of family members. The present of parent was enough to encourage the child in lesson or practice (Barry 1992, cited in Bugeja, 2009). Previous study by Hallam (2013) indicated that the enjoyment of music learning came from the students’ interest rather than for parents to determine it. Thus children have to be enthusiastic to their learning, gaining their knowledge and satisfaction through music learning and this easily lead to supports from family. Perhaps wider family group support, including siblings, relatives may be useful. To get the child gain their satisfaction in music, regularly practice is necessary. As parents mentioned it was hard to set a time to practice, parent might want to plan their child daily schedule or perhaps their own lifestyle. Get to know the child’s biological clock and pick a short period that the child is alert and start practice and make it part of their daily routine. For parents that had not much experiences in music, perhaps teachers can suggest some community music activities to them, that create an opportunity for them to understand the diverse of music cultures. Teachers can encourage parents to attend music events or listening to diverse musical genres and attend concert. For example parents can join a community choir, where the choir members were mostly amateur or not musical proficiency at all.



#### **4.7 Discussion**

Main purpose of the study was to examine Yamaha JMC's (Junior Music Course) requirement of parental involvement, to discuss about parents' perception over their parental involvement in JMC and to identify their patterns of behaviours by focusing on parental involvement in JMC. Firstly, the parental guide was found to be lacking in JMC. Parents were told about their role verbally during a brief trial lesson. The books shows mainly the advantages and learning progress for JMC. There were short texts found in the workbook of JMC, however most of them were presented as a reminder for parents to guide the child. There is a lack of clear guidelines in what the parents should do, such as what exactly they should do when accompanying the child to lesson and practice, what are the problems they normally come across and what are the solutions. Furthermore, some ethnical element such as mobile phone users that may actually distract the children or creating an ambience where the children feel a lack of engagement from the parents. Such also may infuse a tradition where parents are not necessarily need to pay attention during class. Findings from the study have generated a number of parent intervention that may serve as a reference for JMC or similar context, specifically parents' perception and their behaviours during the course to create a positive and negative climate (see figure 4.5).

According to Yamaha Music Foundation Malaysia when the author was trained and were told in 2013, the the reason for parents' attendance in lesson were to make the parent became the model of enjoying music and parents able to review, recreate the lesson atmosphere at home. In yamaha music school, the principle of parents' attendance only needed for the 3-year-old course, Music Wonderland and 4 to 6 years old course, Junior Music Course (JMC), for the courses after JMC, such as JXC, which is the level right after JMC; parents were not requested to attend the lesson regularly.

The reason behind the Yamaha music education system was because students at that age became more independent and could be actively involved in the learning by themselves. From parent's point of view, majority thought that it was good and alright for them to attend. However throughout class observations and interviews in the study, the requirements of parents' attendance in Yamaha education was not fully achieved and parents' perceptions were also not fully conform to their behaviours during JMC. Therefore parents' patterns of behaviours were the crucial aspect that need to be determined and analysed that lead to a positive learning climate that benefits the teacher, children as well as parents.

In addition, via interview and observation, half of the parents were fully aware of their roles in JMC, however some parents were not fully aware and they were not interested in accompanying their children to JMC, some parents think that the child able to participate on their own and while others responded that they were not capable to guide the child. One of the possible factor may be lacking of awareness towards their role in JMC. As from the demographic data, most of the parents themselves did not went through JMC, their educational background involves learning without an accompanying parent, they were doing the traditional way of individual music learning. Thus, they did not feel the necessity of accompany the child. Worst cases like participant 9 and participant 8, that not appeared during class and were passing the role to elder children. Indirectly, the author suspect that if this was done in front of a child, the impression of such reluctance could bring an impression to the child that the class is not important.

In this study, cross-checking on parents demographic reveals that parents whether with high or low interests in music did not affect their involvement with child during

class, similar to parents with or without music background as well as their proficiency in music. The common scenario gathered from the data is all parents never attended or hardly attended any performance. They claimed that they had no chance or no idea about the concert happening around. Perhaps it is because most of parents may think that it is good enough providing a child a proper music lessons and instrument. They may not pay attention on other activity that is not directly related to child's music lesson and practice.

As discussed in chapter 4.5, majority of parents think that it is good to have parent attend the class and their role is important. Nevertheless, although parents have different perceptions of their role and behaviours in class, out of 20 participants surveyed, 18 of those participants in this study still attending the class, regardless their level of interests in music (see chapter 4.4). However, positive and negative classroom climate were shown during observation. Thus we can say that from parents' point of view, they have the right perceptions on their participation, however their way of involvement in child's music learning need to take into consideration. Besides, parents also have various reason when they enrol the child to JMC, most of them think they want to provide the child a well-rounded music education.

Significant behaviours during JMC as discussed in chapter 4.6, is one of the main findings. In this section, taking into consideration of parents' perceptions and interactions, a few traits of behaviours were discovered: parent-child communication, parent-teacher communication and non-communication. As for parent-child communication, such as motivation, affirmation, authoritative, permissive, disengaged and competitiveness, show diverse parents' behaviour in class and each of them lead to positive and negative classroom climate.

From the data gathered, motivational behaviours that lead to positive climate are: compliment, reward, praise; whereas motivate by comparing to others bring negative climate. Affirmation behaviour in some forms of action were observed that lead to positive classroom climate, such as singing along with the child, parents constantly guiding on hand posture by showing or correcting his or her hand and finger position on the keyboard, pointing at the notes on the book as a guide to direct attention when the child is playing on the keyboard and taking down notes from teacher's instruction. However, there was an occasional special case where too much affirmation from a parent may create a negative outcome. The author termed it as a faulty 'knowledge transfer scheme' in JMC, where in the case that parents give wrong instructions and too busy repeat teacher's instructions; the author termed it as staggered teacher-parent-student communication pattern, which parents take over the role as a teacher; teacher acted as primary teacher and children remained as a primary learner in the class, rather than passive secondary learner and eventually it causes stressful parents and dependent, slow-progressed child. It may cause lots of consequences such as becoming a habit where they may face problems in other classes or at school in the future.

Authoritative, permissive and disengaged behaviour shows positive effect when parents are less-engaged with a self-direct child, where the child able to participate well by themselves; unfortunately negative climate happened with passive parental involvement, where less-engaged parents with dependent child. This behaviour caused by the prolonged use of smart phone, parents yawning, late for class, and children were observed with unambiguous expressions. Most of the parent-teacher communication seem to have positive effect to the learning climate. Forms of action were such as parents and teacher discussed about practice and homework, lessons details and choosing the right instrument for the child. For parents who participate unconsciously

with not much interaction with teacher nor child in class but what they do are constantly making own notes, will lead to positive climate and those with no interaction similar to disengaged parenting naturally cause negative climate. Thus, from this research, it is gathered that the different patterns of behaviours, communications and the outcome whether positive or negative climate (refer to table 4.2).

Through the data collected in motivation behaviour in this research, most of the parents mentioned that they motivated their child which was showing the intrinsically motivational that proved by previous research that it was able to gain interest, curiously in learning. However from the data collected in this study, there shown a different result which was almost all parents were still complaining about the difficulties to get the child to practice or rather they have to force the child to practice. But once parents monitored and guided the child or by rewarding the child, which is reported being extrinsically motivated, parents could straight away made the child sit down and start practicing. Therefore if parents keep motivating them intrinsically which they still couldn't make them to practice and soon the child was unable to cope in class no matter how great the child's interests in music and eventually the child might dropped out from the course. In addition, perhaps the culture of Asian parents, the most pervasive belief is perhaps the idea of effort, as opposed to ability, being the key to success and accomplishments (Li, 2001; Stevenson, 1990, cited in Leong 2008), therefore parents have this idea to force them to practice in order to get the achievement. Furthermore, perhaps it was probably after investing large amounts of money into music, what is considered a luxury in a child's education, they were looking forward to the outcomes. So perhaps, in order to get those children who couldn't seem to get intrinsically motivated, parents could initially try to provide some extrinsic motivation such as to guide and monitor them more often and at the same time cultivate their serious learning

attitude to become increasingly intrinsic. Besides, if the child is over or under competitive parents may teach them a more positive behaviours at home. Parents also need to understand every child has their strengths and weaknesses. Findings were also indicated in earlier research of Macmillan (2003), that parents encouraged practice to take place, instructed their child, listened when asked, or encouraged their child or on the other hand, parents had no conception that help could be given. They seem to underestimate their ability to help with music practice.

Throughout both interviews and observations, parents constantly seek for advice on child practice. Parents complained about it was hard getting the child to practice and hard to gain child's interests, for examples, a mother thought the daughter was not interested in music when she observed the child practice at home:

"I'm not satisfied with her progress. She doesn't really show interests now and doesn't want to learn. This is her problem as well because she didn't eat enough and not enough energy. She doesn't want to practice, and she started to watch television frequently." (Participant 9)

Besides, parents also discussed about their difficulties during class and practice. A father mentioned:

"I think she is not focus enough, she refuses to practice at home and I have to scold then only she play. Sometimes I will ask her to look at the other friends can follow instructions and play. It is her concentration. I don't want her to give up, but I feel pressure. I can see her weakness." (Participant 20)

Therefore, in order to make the child to practice, the most common thing parents can do is to reward them after they practiced, or they fix a time, 15 minutes to 30 minutes and make sure they child sit down in front of piano during that period. Nevertheless parents may not satisfied about child's progress or this method might not work all the time. Therefore, we may suggest to parents, in order to make practicing effectively, parents may encourage the child reaching a certain musical goals, at the same time motivate the child while practicing in order to reach the goal and let the child has the sense of accomplishment. Set the goal for playing one piece or even few bars for a day, till the next class, the child able to achieve goal of a week and perform well in class. This may gain more motivation, more efficient in practice and acknowledged what they have accomplished. Parents play an important role in this method, they need lots of effort to monitor the child, set the goal, observe the child, as the child progress, set a more demanding goals or if it is too demanding, reduced the goals. Besides choosing the right timing to practice is also important. Parents may try different time of a day and practice at a time when the child is energetic. Having a child to practice for 10-15 focused minutes is good enough. To make the practice sessions more fun, parents can try to make music together with the child, for example they can try duet; parent can play left hand while the child play right hand. If a parent able to play an instrument, can consider play along as the child sing or parents sing along while they play. Showing the child how much you appreciate and involve in music through playing an instrument, singing, dancing, listening is important, the child eventually paying more attention to the surrounding music.

Parents that claimed that the child has no time to practice might need to readjust the child's schedule or their daily lifestyle. As a pre-school child, parents need to make sure

their daily activities are not overwhelmed or over-scheduled. Contrastingly, a child shouldn't be wasting time on unnecessary activities. Planning a time to practice in child's daily routine is as important as attending the lesson. Another important thing is parents themselves need to be interested in music learning, be excited on what the child has achieved, no matter how small the achievement. A pre-school child normally spend more time at home more than any other place. Parents could cultivate the habit of listening to music at home. Let the child expose to all different genre of music and singing with the child is a good way to internalise the music. Others activities like dancing or feeling the beat is another fun way to get the child's interest in music and getting the steady pulse is one of the important basic musical ability. In order to have positive learning environment, punctuality is very crucial. Parents's emotion need to be controlled, some parents scolded their child when they were not doing well, ended up the child cried or they argued, indirectly it affected the other children. Contrastingly, there were other kind of parents who over-protected their child; they never scolded their child and they looked for all kind of excuses for the child when the child did not finish the homework or did not practice. In general, if the child was not able to cope in class furthermore, most parents claimed that the child wasn't interested or talented in music. They looked for other kind of activities for the child. Families and schools were important factors for children's learning needs.

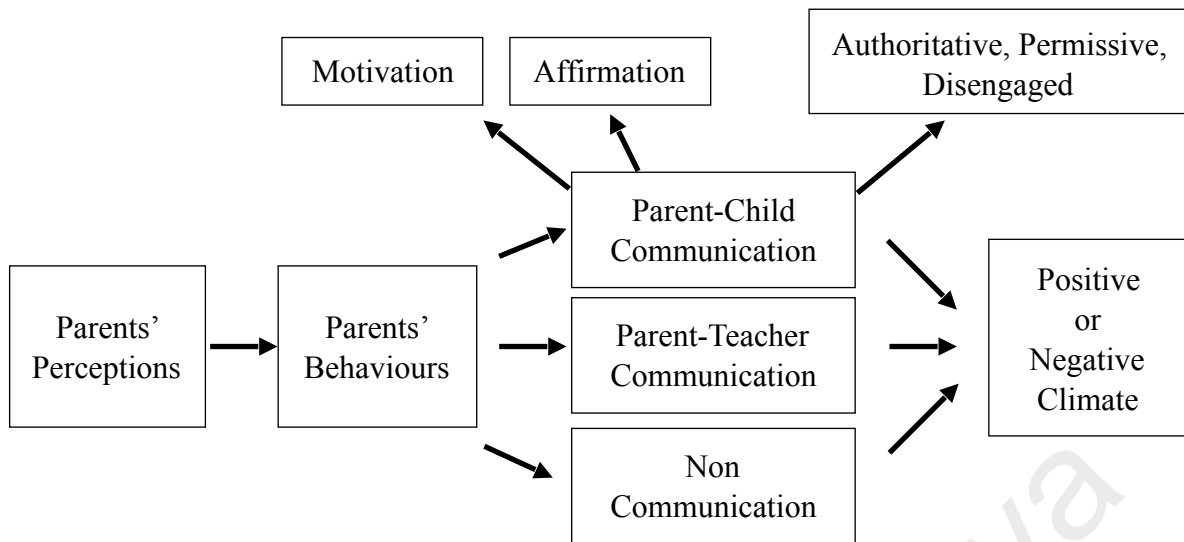
In overall, findings of this study enhance the context of research on exploring parents' perception and identifying different traits of behaviours over their involvement in JMC that create a better classroom climate. However not many research has yet to investigate about children's behaviour in a relation with parents and teachers involvement and support. Examining through teachers' perceptions in emotional support on behaviours may be a nuanced informations. Besides, parenting style is also essential.



Future study may look into various parenting styles that cause on children music development.

**Table 4.2 Lists of Summary: Patterns of behaviours during JMC**

	Positive	Negative
<b>Parent-child communication</b>	<p>Motivation (compliment, encourage, reward, smile, nod, show interest)</p> <p>Affirmation (sing along, guiding hand posture, pointing notes, taking notes)</p> <p>Authoritative, Permissive, Disengaged (less instruction and assistance with self-direct child)</p>	<p>Motivation (by comparing with peers)</p> <p>Faulty 'knowledge transfer scheme' in JMC</p> <p>Staggered teacher-parent-student communication pattern</p> <p>Passive parental involvement JMC</p>
<b>Parent-teacher communication</b>	<p>Instructional support (discuss about child's progress, guide their practice and homework, ask questions: lesson details, choosing instrument)</p>	<p>Parents did not pay attention to teacher's instructions, or communicate with teacher</p>
<b>Non-communication involvement</b>	<p>Observing and learning (not much assisting or instruction, but parents making own reference)</p>	<p>Parents yawn, busy on phone</p> <p>Parent not attending, late or skip classes</p> <p>Dropout from course</p>



**Figure 4.5 A Cross-correlational Model for Parents' Perception that Lead to Different Patterns of Behaviour**

## **CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter concludes the research carried out in six months and also the author's self-reflexive account and participant-observation over the JMC class conducted in Kota Damansara. The overall findings of the study discussed in this chapter, implications of the study followed by the limitations of study.

### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The main objectives of this study: 1) to study Yamaha JMC's (Junior Music Course) requirement of parental involvement, 2) to discuss parents' perception over their involvement in JMC, and 3) to examine patterns of behaviour by focusing on parental involvement in JMC were achieved. Firstly, the study began with a literature review related to the topic. Prior studies have shown varied effects of parents involvement that comes from formal education and music education. Some researches have stated different types of parental involvement, such as in formal education (Cairney & Munsie, 2004; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Oyster, Brickman & Rhodes, 2007; Anderson & Minke, 2007; Hill et al., 2004) and in the music learning (Fagan, Brady Learn & Moss, 1992; Brand, 1986; Zdzinski, 2013; Hallam, 2013; McClellan, 2011; Ho, 2011, Sichivitsa, 2007).

Parents who involved in children's studies have shown positive outcomes; with lesser behaviours problems, higher achievements in grades and better learning abilities (Hill et al., 2004). Besides efforts from parents, involvement from schools and teachers are also important. In music education, parental involvement in children's learning is

necessary especially at the beginning stage of learning. Parents involved by providing a proper learning music environment, (Fagan, Brady, Learn & Moss, 1992, Brand, 1986, Zdzinski, 2013), some researchers found that family with music background is important (Hallam, 2013; Sim & Udaisuk, 2008) whereas some studies found that it had no related (Brand, 1986; Howe & Sloboda, 1991).

Utilising a qualitative research method, research data were collected from Yamaha music school at Kota Damansara, class observations lasted for three months and a series of interview sessions and not limited to the author's self-reflexive account as a JMC teacher for 2 years and 8 months. Methodological design in this study helped the author in meeting with the research objectives. The open-ended interviews questions allowed more discussion and opinions from parents. This research on parental involvement discussed about parents' exposure to music, parents' perceptions over JMC, and their patterns of behaviours during the Yamaha JMC. Through the results, interestingly, most parents thought of the importance of their role in class however their attitudes and behaviour towards JMC are differs. Various behaviours were observed: parent-child, parent-teacher and non-communication, these behaviours created both positive and negative classroom climate and mostly affected by parents.

Findings from this study re-confirms the author's knowledge of JMC's parental requirement from a few sources: the author's self-reflexive account, JMC syllabus, course book and course details. Data gathered and discussed in Chapter 4 shows that there is a lack of detailed guidelines for parents as a reference for them to participate at JMC, however, the main objective of parental involvement is clear. According to Yamaha music school, the purpose of parents' attendance is to able the parents to review and recreate the classroom environment and with these involvement they able to

reinforce the lesson outcomes. Parents, however, were not provided a set of written guidelines on what and how they are integral to the classroom. From the study, parents who attended JMC indicated a strong relationship of parent involvement in music lesson with the child, however parents' music background did not affect child's interest in music but parents' behaviours and their communications with the child in class were vital.

This study reveals that parent-child interaction can be divided into: motivation, affirmation, authoritative, permissive and disengaged parenting by looking into all the traits of parents' behaviours that recorded during the 3-months observations and interviews. Motivation by encouragement and compliments better than motivation by comparing with others. Affirmation that is overreacted in child's learning indirectly lead to negative climate. Authoritative is prove to be most effective but provided the child is independent. Competitive behaviour by an appropriate forcing is encourage whereas too much or never cause the negative effect.

Different forms of parenting were found generating positive and negative outcome. As the results of the data analysis reveal, an extremity in one way or another may lead to weakness in certain areas, such as permissive parenting led to better interest level but slower progress in performance; while authoritative parenting led to better progress in study however, may revoke interest in children.

Finally, as an outcome of this research, a model of communication such as Figure 4.5 was derived. The diagram shows a balanced communicating pathway that must incorporate four elements which the author perceived as important to JMC class. From the data analysis, the author believes that a balanced pathway that combines C1, C2, C3

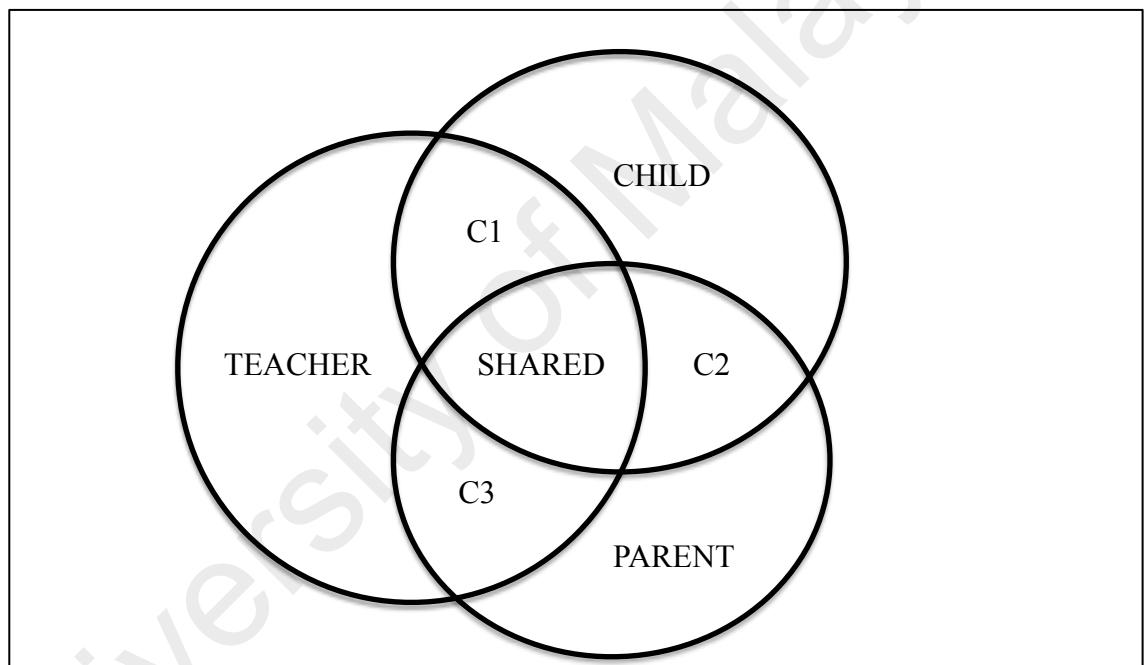
and a shared communication among teacher, parents and child, is crucial in delivering good progress for the students:

C1: Teacher-child communication

C2: Parent-child communication

C3: Parent-teacher communication

Shared: communication made simultaneously among teacher, parent and child



**Figure 5.1 Balanced Pathway of Communication between Teacher, Parent and Child**

From the data analysed in Chapter 4, it is gathered that too much authoritative parenting or too much permissive or disengaged parenting and other behaviours showed imbalanced communication and learning process. Then again, each has its own pros and cons and therefore, following the diagram, C1 allows a practice of a portion of

permissive parenting where teacher can communicate with child without parents' intervention. This allows the child a chance for independence and autonomy. C2 is also important where parents may bring back advice and notes taken during class and create a music environment at home, or assist their children during class in different forms of support as discussed in Chapter 4. At C2, parents can also practice a portion of authoritative parenting while not forgetting the pathway in C1 where a portion of permissive parenting is present. C3 allows discussion between parent and teacher for details in class. At the same time, a shared pathway of three parties exists during the JMC class.

### **5.3 Implication of Research**

Yamaha music schools emphasise on music education and it also strongly recommend parents' attendance in the lesson. Therefore requirements of parental involvement in JMC need to be stated clearly. The research conducted throughout the process of the thesis not only gave the author a clearer understanding of the parents perceptions about their role when attending the class, at the same time documenting the analysis of the data collected allows the author to report on the findings that may serve as a reference for parents participating in JMC.

Firstly, it provides a list of behaviours that among parents, children and teacher which can bring different effect the classroom climates. Suggestions for improving child's musical learning were given for parents. The research has a great impact to the teachers on how to handling issues during JMC and parents understand better which behaviours bring benefit to the child. Moreover, this study can inform many parents out there who have young children learning music or any musical instruments.

#### **5.4 Suggestion For Future Research**

This research generated outcome that may be helpful to serve as a reference used in JMC, and some part of its data may be transferrable to other research context of the same area. However, still, the present study has a limitation in scope due to its nature as a case study. In future, connection between teachers' perception in parental involvement, both in Yamaha JMC as well as other private music lessons may call for further study. Teachers' encouragement of parental involvement could be explored in different perspectives, it could be compared in teaching various kind of instruments, experiences in teaching and different group aged. It would be useful to interview teachers to discover deeply about parental involvement in children's learning and teachers could have better ways to direct parents' involvement and to inspire more teachers to do likewise.

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

As a summary, the study completed a case study on JMC class taught by the author at Yamaha music school at Kota Damansara. The fact that the author is an existing teacher allows the chance of a participant-observation study and hence, allowing a research outcome that comes from such approach instead of an etic perspective. This study not only reveals the various behaviours studied in the case study setting and their outcome whether positive or negative, but at the same time, also impacted on the author's knowledge, as a teacher of JMC course.



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